THE
GENESIS of RELIGION

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The Genesis of Religion

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The Genesis of Religion

by

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To

My Wife

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Foreword

FEW problems have occupied the minds of thinking men so persistently and intensely as the problems of the Origin of Religion. The psychologist has vied with the sociologist and the anthropologist, the philosopher with the philologist and theologian, in their attempt to enhance our comprehension of that peculiar phenomenon which we call religion.

Truly, religion is a strange and wonderful thing. In its distribution it is co-extensive with man; in its nature it is inseparable from man; in human happiness it is the greatest single factor. As an emotional value, it possesses but few rivals in the entire gamut of psychic experience.

In a serious investigation of the religions of mankind, the student will invariably meet certain more or less definite conceptions of *Monotheism*, which seem so strangely similar that they quite naturally suggest either a common origin or a common destination.

We cannot with fairness decline to face the question: are we to regard these traces of monotheism as the first faint rays of dawn, or the last glow of a dying day? Was monotheism the startingpoint, or must we regard it as the goal of the religious development of man?

It is evident that the answer will be determined, to some extent, by the investigator's own personal attitude to religion; at the same time as he will—if he is interested in finding the proper solution—carefully avoid all *parti pris*.

In presenting this volume, I wish to say that it is based on three sources of information:

1. PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS. It was my great privilege to spend several years among some of the save tribes of Southern Madagascar. While studying

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the rude religious conceptions of those natives, I found my first clue to primitive monotheism. It came to the surface in the most unexpected places, and it seemed to have been an integral part of their traditions from times immemorial. To a missionary, a "discovery" of this kind was rather interesting.

2. SPECIAL STUDY. I have had the advantage of a course in Comparative Religion and related subjects at Drew University under the inspiring and sympathetic leadership of Dr. Oscar MacMillan Buck, Dr. Harlan Beach, and Professor George Briggs. Their profound and intimate knowledge of the creeds of the Orient and of the primitive culture of mankind in general induced me to make a special study of Primitive Monotheism.

3. MY VOCATION. The position of teacher of Mission History these twenty years has made it incumbent upon me to devote a considerable time to the study of the various ethnic beliefs and practices.

I am frank to say that the more my vocation has led me to the study of what men believe, the more have I become convinced that monotheism was the original religion of mankind, and that we still find traces of this submerged faith everywhere.

To a Christian this question is of paramount importance. Personally, I am interested in taking note of how the leading scholars of Europe and America have answered the question. Some of these I have quoted quite liberally, not because of being in agreement or disagreement with them, but because they were honest attempts at finding a reasonable solution to one of humanity's greatest problems.

The appended bibliography will indicate my reading on the subject. —THE AUTHOR.

The Genesis of Religion

CHAPTER I

DEFINITION

OUR purpose in this thesis is to investigate the Genesis of Religion. A great many theories have been proposed to account for its origin and growth. It is our intention to study some of the theories proposed, and then finally to arrive at a reasonable conclusion.

It will be necessary first of all, to determine what is meant by the term "religion." The definition of such a familiar word might seem a sufficiently easy matter. The great number of definitions, which have been given is proof positive that an adequate designation is very hard to find. Of course, we know what religion is; but attempt to put down exactly what is in our mind, and we make the discovery that our ideas are not as clear and well-defined as we had at first imagined.

We mentioned that there are a great number of definitions. Dr. Clodd claims there must be at least ten thousand definitions of religion. None of us would care to take the time necessary to check up on that statement; but the main impression that Dr. Clodd wishes to leave with us, is that the definitions are rather too numerous for separate study. Taken in a general way, these definitions, as far as scope and content are concerned, run the entire gamut from Atheism, in which every vestige of reverence is lacking, to that of parson Twackum in Tom

Jones, who defined religion from his own narrow viewpoint as follows: "When I mention religion, I mean the Christian religion, and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion, and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England" (1).

While some students of comparative religion quite seriously doubt whether a definition is at all possible (2), others dispose of the question by averring that a definition of religion is as needless as it is impossible.

When we investigate some of the theories of the origin of religion, we cannot easily escape the conviction that they reflect the personal religious attitude of their proponents. The investigator starts out with the honorable intention of being perfectly impartial and fair-minded, yet it can scarcely be avoided that his own bias will color his definition of religion.

Those who are openly hostile to religion will not hesitate to term it a mere superstition, the product of an intellectual error unavoidable in the infancy of mankind, but to be outgrown as soon as possible (3). The definition of Guiseppe Sergi, cited by Dr. Soper, belongs to this category: "Religion is a pathological manifestation of the protective function, a deviation caused by ignorance of natural causes and their effects" (4).

To regard religion as being, in the last analysis, but a form of selfishness, caused by ignorance, is to set at defiance alike the general testimony of human consciousness and the most manifest facts in history. The religion of millions is directly opposed to their selfishness, which it constantly condemns. Religion has, in fact, been the chief spring of whatever of unselfishness has brightened the history of our race. Surely there must have been some reason besides human selfishness for this universal acceptance of religion.

We turn now to those who were favorably disposed to religion. In this group we may expect to find a conception of religion that shall be more rational and comprehensive. He who loves not, understands not. This may be applied to those who attempt to define religion. We must, however, bear in mind that even in this group there will be a tendency to one-sided views, describing only certain phases of religion in its relation to human life.

Among definitions of this class the most important and influential, probably, has been that of Schleiermacher, who says that religion "considered simply in itself, is neither a knowing nor a doing, but a determination of the feelings" (5). That which distinguishes the religious feeling from all other feelings is said to be this, that we are conscious of ourselves as absolutely dependent. He argues that religion cannot consist in knowing, else the man who knew most would be the most religious; neither in action, else the religiousness of an action would be determined by its own inherent character, as bad or good, as significant or absurd; but actions of every variety, the best and the worst, the most significant, the most silly and absurd, are recognized by some as religious; whence he infers that the religiousness of any act must be determined, not by its own essential character, but by the feelings of which it is the expression (6).

Schleiermacher's definition has been criticized most severely. Perhaps the most merciless is that of Hegel's. He claimed that if it were true that the sentiment of dependence was the one essential element in religion, then a dog would be the most religious of all creatures . . . .

Religion has also been defined as *Will*, or the fulfillment of moral obligations. Kant's well-known declaration was that "Religion is the recognition of all duties as divine commands." It may be readily granted that religion concerns the will, and that so closely and necessarily that where there is no willing, there cannot be said to be religion. But we can no more restrict religion to the volitional, than to the emotional or the cognitive faculty.

The difficulty, therefore, with the above definitions, is that the emphasis is placed so strongly on one or another of the functions of the human mind that religion becomes less comprehensive than it actually is. Religion functions in every department of human life, and must be recognized as all-embracing, involving the intellect, the emotions and the will.

We face this same difficulty from another angle when we make our definition of religion so elevated and so restricted that some of the important religions of the world are automatically ruled out. For instance, if we require in the definition the belief in a supreme deity or of judgment after death, the adoration of idols or the practice of sacrifice or other partially diffused doctrines or rites, no doubt many faiths may be excluded from the category of religions. By the same token, Buddhism in its original form would be denied the right of being called a religion, because it neither explicitly nor implicitly assumed the recognition of a Deity or deities.

Others have defined religion in terms of worship. Menzies would make religion "a worship of higher powers from a sense of need" (7). Speaking in the same vein, A. S. Geden says: "On the whole, then, it should seem that the essential quality or nature of religion is best described as consisting in worship" (8).

Finally, there are some who make the definition without any necessary reference to higher powers or to God. Dr. Soper mentions several of this class. We shall cite but one of them.

W. K. Wright: "The genius of religion is the endeavor to secure the conservation of socially recognized values" (9).

To reduce religion to socially recognized values means to eviscerate religion of that which it stands for among all races of mankind. A religion confined to social values is no longer a religion.

What, then, is religion? Religion consists of a number of elements. It is a relationship of conscious dependence on higher powers; it makes a demand on the whole of man's life, intellect, emotion and will; it is both individual and social; it is worship, yet it is more than worship; and it concerns all the values which give worth and meaning to human life.

Same as Soper

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(1) E. Clodd, Animism, p. 9.
(2) E. D. Soper, Religions of Mankind, p. 16.
(3) J. H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion, p. 24.
(4) E. D. Soper, Op. Cit. p. 19.
(5) Fr. Schleiermacher, Der Christliche Glaube, 5te Ausgabe, Seite 6.
(6) S. H. Kellogg, The Genesis and Growth of Religion, p. 12.
(7) A. Menzies, History of Religion, p. 13.
(8) Cited by E. D. Soper, Op. Cit., p. 23.
(9) E. D. Soper, Op. Cit., pp. 22, 23, 24.

CHAPTER II

THE UNIVERSALITY OF RELIGION

HAVING pointed out a few of the more or less successful definitions of religion, the next step would naturally be to investigate whether religion is confined to certain races, areas and epochs, or that it is a universal phenomenon.

Is man inherently religious? If so, then the question of the universality of religion is admittedly settled. At the present time the consensus of opinion seems to be favorable to this view. The various schools of anthropology and ethnology are decidedly in favor of it. It seems to be taken for granted that man at all times and in all places has practiced some kind of religion.

But it was not always thus. Only a few years ago there were not a few men who wrote and taught that religion was *not* universal. It may not be amiss to cite some of the chief exponents of that idea.

Sir John Lubbock, in his book: *The Origin of Civilization* attempted to show that religion was not universal, that there were tribes of men scattered fairly widely over the earth who had no religion, no worship, no belief in higher powers with whom they were related. To all appearances, Sir Lubbock made out a strong case, as he marshalled his hosts of "proofs" from many races and peoples. But his proofs can no longer be admitted as evidence. The apparent and real weakness of his argument lies in the fact that his conclusions are based on hear-say. As a case in point, we may mention that he quotes a certain Mr. Jukes as authority for the assertion that the natives of the Dalrymple Islands were atheists, but it appears that this Mr. Jukes—an honest man no doubt—was only one day on the islands; nor is his testimony more than negative, to the effect that in that one day on the islands he was not able to discover among the natives any trace of a belief in God.

The entire structure of Sir Lubbock has been assaulted and battered hopelessly to the ground by the great Tylor himself. In his masterly work, *Primitive Culture,* he has demolished it beyond repair. The witnesses for Lubbock's assertions are summoned one by one, and he disproves, out of their own mouths, their allegations about "godless tribes." Tylor concludes: "The thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilization, perhaps even of human existence" (1).

E. M. Curr, (*The Australian Race,* Vol. I.) is strongly of the opinion that those who have written to show that the blacks had some knowledge of God, practiced prayer, and believed in places of reward and punishment beyond the grave, have been imposed upon; and that until they had learned something of Christianity from missionaries and others, the blacks had no beliefs or practices of the sort (2).

A. W. Howitt, than whom there is none more thoroughly conversant with the Australian blacks, has this to say about Curr's statement: "They have such beliefs, which were evidently unknown to Mr. Curr, and which he was not likely to learn from the manner of his inquiries concerning God and the next world. Nor would those he questioned voluntarily tell him, even if they understood his meaning, the sacred and secret teachings of the initiation ceremonies" (3). Mr. Curr's deficient knowledge should have received appreciable aid from his correspondents, whose valuable contributions he recognizes on a later occasion (4). One of these makes specific mention of the Larrakia who believe in a being "who dwells in the stars, and never dies."

When Spencer and Gillen published their two volumes on the Australian natives, declaring that they had observed no belief in a real divinity among the Arunta, the declaration remained unchallenged until Strehlow assured us that this people, as well as the Loritja, recognize, under the name Altjira, a veritable "good god" (5).

The Andaman Islands, in the Bay of Bengal, are remote from other shores, and are protected from foreign influences by dangerous coral reefs, and by the reputed ferocity and cannibalism of the natives. These are Negritos, and are commonly spoken of as most abject savages. Unlike the Australians, they use bows and arrows, but are said to be incapable of striking light, and at all events, find the process so difficult that, like the Australians and the farmer in the Odyssey, they are compelled "to hoard the seeds of fire." The Andamanese, long spoken of as "godless," owe much to Mr. E. H. Man, an English official, who spent eleven years among them, won their confidence, mastered their difficult language, and made a careful study of their religious beliefs. He found them to have a clearly defined conception of an immortal God, Puluga, who rules over all, and to whom all are held accountable (6).

Mr. A. R. Brown, in his book, *The Andaman Islanders*, dissents very radically from the verdict reached by Mr. Man. When it is remembered, however, that Brown himself admits that his stay on the islands was limited to less than three years, and that his intercourse with the natives was carried on mostly by means of interpreters, it will readily be seen that his objections carry but little weight.

The Pygmies of the African jungle are admittedly on the lowest rung of the ladder, both ethnically and physically. If a godless race is to be found anywhere, we may reasonably expect the Pygmies to be such a race. But Le Roy, who spent a life-time among them, discovered ample evidence of a clear and distinct belief in a Supreme Being (7).

In brief, it may be conceded by all, that the old assertion about non-religious tribes, does not rest on that sufficient proof which we have a right to demand.

A question quite naturally presents itself at this point. Granted that religion is at present a universally recognized factor in human life,—*when* did it become such a factor? In other words, when did man begin to be religious? Must we posit a pre-religious condition of the human race, out of which, in course of time, religious conditions have arisen? Even Tylor, who firmly believed in the evolution of religion, conceded that "it does not seem advisable to start from this ground in an investigation of religious development. Though the theoretical niche is ready and convenient, the actual statue to fill it is not forthcoming" (8).

The question as to *when* man first began to be religious, may entail the implication that there was perhaps a time when he had no religion, or that he might have been in the process of becoming religious. This implication, however, has not the least shred of evidence in favor of it. Of course, the history of no nation reaches back to a point anywhere near the absolute beginning either of religion or of the human race; but while the most ancient records show us religion prevailing then as now, may we not conclude that this has always been the case?

Beyond the historic ages, and beyond those referred to by vague traditions, which we call semi-historic, lies the epoch of culture called the Stone Age, divided into the more recent or neolithic period, and the older or paleolithic period. Concerning the former, there can be no doubt whatever that religion exercised a tremendous influence on men's minds. Dr. Brinton, speaking of that period, says: "We have numberless sepulchres of people then living, mighty mounds and massive temples, such as Stonehenge and Karnac; we have them by the tens of thousands, over vast areas, remaining as indubitable proofs that the chief occupation of those early sons of the soil was to worship the gods. No archeologist questions this" (9).

What about man's relation to the Deity or deities during that period of his existence which we call *pre-historic?* Again we are justified in assuming that pre-historic man, as far as he is revealed by archeology, was not without religion.

Personally, Dr. Reinach has no use for religion—witness his writings on this subject—but he is forced to admit that "man, take him where and when you will, is a religious animal; and religiosity, as the Positivists would say, is the most essential of its attributes. It can no longer be maintained that *quaternary man* was ignorant of religion" (10).

✓ Something ought to be said in exoneration of the old conception about "godless tribes." It was, in a great measure, built on misinformation. It is an exceedingly difficult problem for foreigners, even though they may have resided for a considerable length of time among a barbarous people, to gain accurate information about its religious beliefs. As a rule, the natives are quite disinclined to profane their faith and practices by disclosing them freely to strangers and aliens. Very often they openly resent it by a sullen silence, or by fictitious inventions on the spur of the moment.

Without quoting the great number of ethnologists who concur in the universality of religion, we cannot refrain from adding in our references a few of the leading exponents of that doctrine (11-16).

References in Chapter II

(1) E. B. Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. I, p. 421.
(2) E. M. Curr, The Australian Race, Vol. I, pp. 44, 45.
(3) A. W. Howitt, Native Tribes of S. E. Australia, pp. 503, 504.
(4) E. M. Curr, Op. Cit., p. 253.
(5) E. Durkheim, Elementary Forms of Religious Life, p. 286.
(6) E. H. Man, Jour. Anthrop. Inst., Vol. XII, p. 157 et seq.
(7) A. LeRoy, The Religion of Primitives, p. 304.
(8) E. B. Tylor, Op. Cit., p. 418.
(9) D. G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples, p. 34.
(10) B. C. A. Windle, Religions Past and Present, p. 31
(11) G. A. Barton, The Religions of the World, p. 3.
(12) L. H. Jordan, Comparative Religion, Its Genesis and Growth, p. 225.
(13) A. Menzies, A History of Religion, p. 23.
(14) Fr. Ratzel, The History of Mankind, Vol. I, p. 40.
(15) S. Reinach, Cults, Myths and Religions, pp. IV, V, VI.
(16) F. Schleiter, Religion and Culture, p. 74.

CHAPTER III

THE LESS IMPORTANT THEORIES

IT HAS been noted that the universality of religion is at present quite generally accepted. While this may be conceded, the question of *Origin* is still very much in dispute.

When we consider the profound and far-reaching influence exerted by religion on the thoughts and actions of man in every age, we need not be surprised to find the best minds in search of a solution of this question. Granted that religion is a universal fact, how did it originate? Whence this potent factor in man's experience? What caused primitive man to assume an attitude of worship in the presence of what he considered superior powers? Most important questions, assuredly, and many answers have been proposed down through the ages.

These many answers naturally reflect the personal bias or attitude of the investigators. Hence we may look for an over-emphasis of the subjective opinions, as men endeavor to find evidence in support of their own theories. We may expect some of these theories to be more curious than plausible, but most of them are the honest efforts of honest men, and for that reason should be studied and respected.

Before investigating the current theories of the origin of religion, it may be of interest to recall a few of those answers which former generations have tried to formulate.

An ancient theory, still surviving, is that which has its name from Eupherus, a Sicilian writer at the time of Alexander the Great. He claims that religion arose from the respect and reverence paid to kings and heroes during their lives, continued by custom after their death (1).

The Fear Theory. A favorite theory in times past was that religions evolved from the emotion of fear. It was taught by the Latin poet Petronius, and has been strenuously advocated by many modern philosophers and ethnologists. Tiele, for instance, makes fearsome dependence the root of all religion.

Yet, what truth might lie in this is vitiated by the connotation of dependence in the scheme of Tiele's philosophy according to which it is the beginning of loving trust and confidence. Even the lowest savage, according to Tiele, feels a religious fear which interprets itself to his consiousness as a need of communion with the divine power and the need of a redeemer.

But this interpretation of savage thought is almost grotesque. To a savage, as to a beast, whatever is unknown is uncanny, and whatever is uncanny is feared. There is certainly no beginning of a feeling of need of communion with a divine power in the savage's fear of a disease-devil or other malignant spirits.

The comment of Brinton is here *apropos*: "Now if this emotion is alone sufficient to evoke religious feeling, why is that feeling absent in the timid lower animals? Why is it so feeble in so many cowards, and so strong in many a hero?" (2).

Religion an Invention of Priests. This, too, is an old theory. In the sixth century, B. C. heterodox Hindus said that all religions were invented by the priests for their own profit (3).

Whether the Deists of more modern times had any contact with the ancient Hindus is a problem we do not have the time to investigate; but the following characterization by Dr. E. D. Soper will show just how they explain the origin of religion: "A class of men arose who came to be known as priests who found they could work upon the fears and credulity of men, and by so doing gain advantage for themselves. In order to fasten their grip upon men they devised beliefs and ritual practices which worked upon the superstitious fears of men and gave the priesthood a hold like bands of iron." These wily men saw their chance to keep their power, and have even down to our day been devising new schemes to make their tenure perpetual" (4).

To this the French ethnologist, A. Reville, makes the rather telling thrust: "As if religion had not necessarily and everywhere preceded the priest! . . . . If there had not first been religion, there would never have been any priests" (5).

The Sense of Need. It has been maintained that religion arose from the sense of need. While much may be adduced as evidence of this idea, there is, at least, one argument that is fatal to it. The sense of need is apparently common to all animals. There seems to be no valid reason for any differentiation between the needs of the animals and those of man. Hence all the animals, higher and lower, have a conception of religion, and the next conclusion would be: the creatures experiencing most acutely the sense of need are the most religious. Is there any proof of this in the animal kingdom, or even a trace of it? No. Never has even the most intelligent chimpanzee shown any sign of a tendency to fetish worship, or made a god out of some dead monkey, gone before him, or been discovered clasping his hands in adoration of the rising sun.

The Vital Instinct as the Originating Factor of Religion. Discussing Ernest Crawley's book, *The Tree of Life,* Dr. J. H. Leuba says: "With Crawley's vigorous and reiterated affirmation that the vital instinct is the source of religion, I am in hearty agreement, but have added with equal emphasis that the love and lust of life is the source of all human conduct and not of religion alone" (6).

The objection made to the Sense-of-Need theory, may be brought with equal cogency against that of Crawley and Leuba. The vital instinct, "the love and lust of life" are common to all animate nature. Hence all animal nature is religious. . . . .

Perhaps the most perverted and unscientific of all theories is that which attributes the origin of religion to "misunderstood erotic emotion" as Lowie puts it (7). "Apparently this theory is advanced on the ground that it is at or about adolescence that it often happens that genuine religious feelings are first awakened. That, however, is about the time that young people usually begin to think with any intelligence and it is a coincidence that it is also at the time when sexual influences are likely to become effective" (8).

We agree with Lowie that few theories are less instructive than this.

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(1) D. G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples, p. 42.
(2) D. G. Brinton, Op. Cit., p. 45.
(3) E. W. Hopkins, The Religions of India, p. 2.
(4) E. D. Soper, The Religions of Mankind, p. 30.
(5) A. Reville, A History of Religion, p. 58.
(6) J. H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion, p. 48.
(7) Cited by B. C. A. Windle, Religions Past and Present, p. 37.
(8) B. C. A. Windle, Op. Cit., p. 37.

CHAPTER IV

The More Important Theories

THE ANIMISTIC THEORY

BY FAR the most interesting, as well as the most influential, theory advanced these last sixty years is the so-called *Animistic Theory.*

In the year 1841, Auguste Comte described in his *Philosophie Positive* (Vol. V, p. 30) the primitive form of religious consciousness as that in which man conceives of all external bodies as animated by a life analogous to his own. This has since been designated as polyzoism or panthelism or panvitalism, and represents the obscure undifferentiated groundwork out of which the Tylorian Animism arose (1).

The term "Animism" owes its origin and prestige to the classical treatise on *Primitive Culture* by Dr. E. B. Tylor, professor of anthropology in the University of Oxford in 1871. The author himself defines Animism as "the groundwork of the Philosophy of Religion" (2).

A group of scholars more or less closely identified with Tylor's view, includes many of the most prominent names in ethnology and anthropology, though of late years both the theory and its chief proponents are receding into the background. However, because of its wide acceptance in responsible and influential quarters until quite recently, this theory is entitled to a thoughtful and dispassionate consideration.

A brief statement of the Animistic theory, accounting for the genesis of religion, will serve as a convenient starting-point for our discussion.

According to Tylor, early man attributed life to nature and the objects around him. He looked upon all he saw as animated, as possessing a spirit like his own. He did this by the only instrument of reason he had to explain what he saw and heard and felt. It was the principle of analogy, according to which all he saw was explained by reference to his own personality. To him, somebody, more or less like himself, was accountable for everything that happened. He carried it out to such lengths, that the very existence of a separate thing, even a lifeless thing, like a stone, could be explained only on the basis of an inner spirit which was its life. "Thus all nature became alive" says Dr. Soper, "filled with innumerable spirits everywhere and in everything. There was to early man and there is to the savage of today no such thing as inanimate nature. It was all alive and throbbing with a life like his own" (3).

Before undertaking any examination of this theory there is a question that is likely to press for an answer. Granted that this conception of aliveness was the initial reaction of primitive man to the nature all about him, how did it transpire that he developed a *religion* out of that conception? And why was man affected in this particular way, while the animals next to him in creation, seemed to be absolutely devoid of it?

That he might be able to account for this phenomenon, Professor Tylor collected and systematized that colossal mass of material which he gave to the world in his two large volumes on Primitive Culture.

These volumes really inaugurated the study of comparative religion, and the theory advocated by their author was destined be become the matrix out of which several other theories have been evolved. These and other reasons should invite a serious study of them.

To this end we can do no better than to profit by the study devoted to the subject by W. Schmidt, in his splendid treatise "L'Origine de l'Idée de Dieu." (Anthropos, 1908), where he summarizes the Tylorian theory as follows :—

1. Considering, on the one hand, sleep, waking, sickness, death, and on the other hand, dreams and visions, man at an early date must have formed the idea that there exists in him something distinct from the body, viz; the soul. In the first category of these phenomena, he sees the body more or less abandoned by its vivifying principle, and in the second—visions and dreams—this principle seems to manifest itself as isolated from the body. From this first idea comes belief in the revival of the soul, in metempsychosis, and the worship of the dead.

2. The worship of ancestors begets the idea of pure spirits. These spirits being able in their turn to take possession of this or that body, according to their fancy, we have, as a consequence, the conception of sickness and death being produced by invisible, hostile intervention, belief in diabolic possession, veneration for the objects of nature, fetishism, and lastly idolatry, properly so called.

3. Soon all the elements of nature are regarded as animated, and we have the cult of celestial phenomena, of waters, rivers, the sea, trees, groves, mountains, animals, totems. The culminating point of this evolution is

the species-divinity, which is no longer a concrete deified object, but an entire species.

4. Then is born the loftier polytheism of half-civilized races, with gods of the sky, rain, thunder, wind, earth, water, fire, sun, moon; after that the gods who preside over diverse phases and functions of human life, birth, death, agriculture, war, and finally above all these, the father of the gods.

5. Even in the lower degrees of Animism we find traces of a dualistic system; but the terms *good* and *bad* signify rather *useful* and *injurious*.

6. Above souls or *manes*, local divinities, and spirits overseeing the elements, we can distinguish in the theology of the savages, sometimes disfigured, again majestic, certain shadowy notions of a Supreme Being, that increases in vigor and glory in its course through the history of religion.

7. Monotheism could have been produced in different ways: by the elevation of a polytheistic divinity to supreme rank, whereby he became the first father of the gods or the most powerful divinity of nature; by constituting a sort of "pantheon," the king of which was the supreme divinity, the *Anima Mundi* (4).

This is a brief resumé of the theory. It will be readily admitted by the student of comparative religion that as a theory it is both comprehensive and ably sustained. In scope and volume there is only one other work that can be compared to it, namely, Sir Frazer's mighty volumes on "The Golden Bough."

Reason

If Tylor's conclusions are faulty,—and there seem to be valid reasons for believing that such is the case—it is due to the fact that he makes the evolutionary hypothesis an *a priori* law, and thus assumes a number of premises which are untenable.

The method of proof employed may be challenged on the ground that he cites illustrations from dissimilar cultural areas, different levels of culture, and diverse mental processes, to prove that the animistic theory is of universal distribution, and by these means believes that he has adequately demonstrated "that primitive man, at all times and in all places, cherishes a reflective theory that the world as such and at large is alive, however difficult it may be for us to make clear to ourselves precisely what is implied by such a statement and however bizarre may be the implications which are involved in it" (5).

Let us pass in review some of the more outstanding premises upon which the theory is based:—

1. Mr. Tylor postulates a period of primitive atheism. 1) That is to say that man at a certain stage in his development was utterly ignorant of any conception of a god. It has already been pointed out in another connection, that there is not a shred of historical or ethnological evidence to show that any such race has ever existed.

2. The theory assumes a primitive period of bestiality and idiocy. 2) The evolutionary hypothesis requires that primitive man be a dull brute barely emerged from animality. In that remote day there was no clear difference between the living and the non-living, between what was personal and what was natural, between the psychical and the corporeal. While in this state it is evident that man was aware neither of his superiority over other animals nor of his own personality, nor of his spiritual nature.

3. Max Müller attacked the Tylorian theory in so far as it involved the supposition that primitive man regarded

the world as such and at large to be alive in the literal sense of the word, and seeks to show that he was not necessarily "committed to the startling assertion that the sun and moon, the tree and river are in the true sense of the word, anthropomorphous or manlike" (6).

"Concrete investigations have invariably shown," says F. Schleiter, "that the definite scientific information possessed and utilized by primitive man, is enormously greater than is immediately evident, or than that which is ordinarily ascribed to him by the variegated horde of evolutionary hypotheses" (7).

Professor J. H. Leuba, who would scarcely be accused of being a conservative in his religious views, has this to say of early man:—"Why, then, should one be unwilling to attribute to the most primitive savage a degree of tender regard for his great ancestor or for his Creator? I do not imagine the first group of human beings to have been necessarily either bloodthirsty brutes, incapable of anything but violence and cruelty, or abject, timorous creatures, familiar only with fear. The lowest men we know do not at all answer to either description. There is among them kindness, mutual consideration and even real affection" (8).

The question has often been considered whether the mental powers of the savage are distinctly inferior. This has been answered by taking children of savages when quite young and bringing them up in civilized surroundings. The verdict is unanimous "that they display as much aptitude for the acquisition of knowledge, and as much respect for the precepts of morality, as the average English or German boy or girl, but with less initiative" (9).

3

Note

4. In the next place it should be noted that in accordance with the Tylorian principle it is assumed that the religious development of a people must necessarily be parallel to its social, political, literary, artistic and other development. This is an illusion common to all those who make evolution a dogma whose authority must rule every question in every detail.

History shows beyond dispute that there is no constant and necessary relation between the advancement of an individual or a race in intellectual and material civilization, and the development of religious ideas.

The criticism expressed by Reville is especially directed against the above described assumption. He says: "Our young Science of Religion has suffered much from the embraces of that philosophy which tries to know how everything ought to have been, without first trying to know something of what really has been, and which, if facts happen to run counter to its postulates, disposes of all difficulties with a self-complacent *Tant pis pour les faits* . . . I cannot protest too strongly against that pseudo-philosophical sociolism which tries to put evolution in the place of history, and which, instead of descending from the known to the unknown, imagine that we can ascend far more easily from the known to the known. Before we have recourse to the theories of evolution in religion, language or mythology, we ought surely first to learn what history has to teach us. Let us not imagine that evolution can defy the authority of history" (10).

Evolution hypothesis
not historically
substantiated - not
scientific

√ 5. One of the most serious defects of the Animistic theory is this that it is based on the hypothesis that the crudest first ideas were little by little elevated and perfected; hence the conception of a superior personal God, the author and master of the world must have arisen only in religions already advanced, among cultivated peoples, in the bosom of more or less elaborated civilizations. It was held by Tylor and his disciples that all notions of supernatural beings must be ranged in a unilinear series, in such a way that the loftier conceptions of the deity must be assumed to have grown out of less worthy ones. When many and overwhelming proofs to the contrary appeared, Tylor would credit them to missionary influences, even when such influence was impossible to trace, or he would refer it to ancestor worship on the pattern of earthly royalty. It was in this connection that Mr. Andrew Lang countered by asking how such a process was possible among peoples, who, though they knew nothing of kings nor of ancestor-worship, still possessed a clear conception of a Supreme God. This rejoinder of Mr. Lang has never been met by the animistic school.

The most prominent of American ethnologists of the present day, Mr. Lowie, says *a propos* this phase of Tylor's theory: "History, as a matter of fact, seems to demonstrate that gods do not always improve ethically with advancing culture." Then he goes on to ask: "Why, then, could not the conception of a 'high god' be held by the very simplest tribes, a god, that is to say, who could be described as a 'primeval eternal Being, author of all things, the father of man, the invisible, omniscient guardian of morality?' " (11).

Dr. R. J. Swanton, the eminent anthropologist, president of the Society of American Anthropologists, says in this connection: "A second error has crept into Anthropology from an over-accentuation of the uniformitarian side of evolution. In order to combat 'Special Creation' the early champions of evolution naturally strove to minimize differences between species, genera, and so on, but in doing this they somewhat overplayed their hand" (12).

The evidence of the belief in a High God or as Howitt terms him, an All-Father, in Australia, is sufficient evidence in itself to show that the theory of Tylor is no longer tenable. In the Australian myths this High God is represented as existing before death entered the world and that he still exists. To quote Howitt: "The animistic theory of Tylor breaks down when it encounters High God like Atu atu" . . . And of the native in the South-East of Australia he says: "There is the supernatural anthropomorphic being in whom the tribes believe under the different names" (13).

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(2) E. B. Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. I, p. 385.
(3) E. D. Soper, The Religions of Mankind, p. 32.
(4) W. Schmidt, L'Origine de L'Idée de Dieu. Anthropos 1908, p. 139.
(5) F. Schleiter, Religion and Culture, p. 79.
(6) F. Max Müller, Anthropological Religion, p. 74.
(7) F. Schleiter, Op. Cit., p. 34.
(8) J. H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion, pp. 127, 128.
(9) D. F. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples, p. 15.
(10) A. Reville, A History of Religions, p. 9.
(11) R. H. Lowie, Primitive Religion, p. 121.
(12) J. R. Swanton, Some Anthropological Misconceptions. Article in The American Anthropologist, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1917, p. 467.
(13) A. W. Howitt, Native Tribes in S. E. Australia, p. 488.

CHAPTER V

THE ANIMISTIC THEORY

(Continued)

THE preceding chapter has brought in sufficient evidence to show how untenable is this particular postulate of Tylorian Animism. And we might well rest our case at this point. But we still hold in reserve witnesses, whose names are among the foremost in anthropology, and whose testimony should be relevant to the question. We cite Paul Radin:

"In 1898 Andrew Lang published *The Making of Religion*, in which he claimed that the evolutionary school of ethnology was wrong in one of its fundamental assumptions, namely, that belief in a supreme deity never had existed among so-called primitive tribes. He contended that ethnologists, misled by certain pre-conceptions, had misinterpreted those indications pointing in such a direction, crediting to Christian influence those definite instances where the facts could not possibly be denied.

"The layman seemed to feel a certain resentment at having mere savages anticipate a supposedly exalted religious faith. That the professional ethnologist and ethnological theorist should have scouted the idea is natural enough, considering the ascendency of evolutionary theory at the time. To have admitted among primitive peoples the existence of monotheism in any form would have been equivalent to abandoning their whole doctrine of evolutionary stages. And this they were not prepared to do, nor did the facts at the time definitely warrant it.

"Twenty-five years [now thirty years] have elapsed since Lang wrote his book, and his intuitive insight has been abundantly corroborated. The ethnologists were quite wrong. Accurate data obtained by trained specialists have replaced his rather vague examples. That many primitive peoples have a belief in a supreme Creator no one today seriously denies.

"The cardinal error is and always has been the assumption that every element in culture must have had an evolution, and one comparable to that which exists in the animal world . . . But it is precisely in its application to culture, to thought and to temperament that the evolutionary theory even in its hey-day proved so unsatisfactory and even harmful" (1).

There is no reason whatsoever for supposing that certain concepts require a long period to evolve. Radin says of Söderblom: "For, like the most orthodox of evolutionists, he cannot bring himself to believe that the mentality of primitive people is not essentially different in kind from our own. He has been led astray by the data he selected. He practically bases his analysis on the ridiculously inadequate and unsatisfactory material from Australia and the vague statements found in early accounts of American Indians. But the real criticism of Dr. Söderblom's position is that just indicated, that to him explicit and implicit monotheism must represent the last phases of a long and gradual development" (2).*

Another argument. An effect cannot rise above its cause. Now, whether a man believes in religion or not, no person conversant with history will doubt the tremendous influence which it has had, nationally and individually. That is a fact which requires explanation and does not seem to receive it from these theories of an evolutionary type. We have in mind the evolution of such gods as that trickster and immoral deity with whom all students are familiar in the shape of Jupiter, Zeus and many an other. By some this is held to be a stage in the direction of the attainment of the idea of a single, pure and holy Being. Is that really credible? Mr. Lang's criticism of this idea seems to dispose of it entirely. He asks us to conceive that Zeus was *originally* not a father and *guardian*, but the lewd and tricky ghost of a medicine-man, a dancer of indecent dances, a wooer of other men's wives, a shape shifter, or, as in the case of some savage deities, a burlesque droll or a mere jocular bugbear. And he asks by what means such a character came to be accredited later with the loftiest attributes, and how he could be the originator of the tribal ethics, which in practice, he daily broke and despised. Students who argue for the possible priority of the lowest, or, as I call them, mythical attributes of the Being must advance an hypothesis of the concretion of the nobler elements around the original wanton and mischievous ghost (4).

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*In this discussion the statement of Father W. Schmidt is quite pertinent. He says: "Sur ce point une influence néfaste a été particulièrement exercée par l'application outrée ou, pour mieux dire, fausse du principe de l'évolution, qui place reguliérement au commencement de chaque évolution ce qui est plus bas, plus imparfait. Une telle conception force continuellement à prononcer implicitément ou explicitément, des jugements sur les formes religieuses que l'on étudie, parce qu'autrement on ne pourrait pas constituer la série des valeurs ascendantes. Une telle conception corrompt la science comparée des religions jusque dans ses racines. En même temps on se trouve ici en face d'une interpretation du principe de l'évolution qui est fausse en soi" (3).

Again we desire to press the point that on the sound principle of the effect not rising above its cause, the emergence of the higher from the lower is not a likely thing to occur.

The next unwarranted assumption on which this particular theory is based is that of confounding what is *crudest* with what is *simplest*. It is very evident that the strongest, the ones best constituted, best armed for life's struggle, are not always the finest and the most intelligent. Similarly, because man at his origin was ignorant of our modern discoveries, built no palaces, wore only rudimentary clothes, possessed little or nothing of what constitutes our material civilization, we cannot conclude that he was completely lacking in intelligence, religion, or morality, or that he possessed only very imperfect elements thereof.

That the first men had or must have had religious notions but little complicated, we do not deny; that such notions were valueless or even very crude, must be proved. "We admit," says Kellogg, "that the first men could not have been called civilized, they were not the equals of modern races in respect of actual attainments. Rational considerations, modern discoveries, and the record in Genesis, all alike require us to deny this. They went naked at first, were then clothed with skins; they were ignorant of the art of working in metals, as of other arts. Nevertheless, it does not follow from this deficiency in attainments that the primitive man must have been such a semi-idiot as the animistic theory of the origin of religion supposes. All the evidence, as yet before the world, is clearly to the contrary" (5).

The animistic theory fails when put to the test. This is so apparent from the foregoing that no further proof is necessary. And it is a well-known fact that many of the leading ethnologists have discarded it.

Professor A. A. Goldenweiser says, "We have come to conceive of intellectual progress, from savagery to civilization, not as an evolution of mentality, but as a continuous accumulation of positive knowledge and a correlated advancement in the degrees to which such knowledge determines thought" (6).

L. H. Jordan quotes Professor Jastrow to the effect that "Animism, as a distinct evolutionary phase of religion, has recently fallen into disrepute," and he makes bold to declare that "it may be questioned whether Animism is a phase of religion at all." He concludes that it is rather a "philosophical substratum of an early form of religion" (7).

That Animism is not a sufficient theory to account for primitive religion, is the conclusion of Dr. Brinton. "Animism," he says, "should be regarded, not as a form of religion, but rather as a stage in its development" (8).

CONCLUSION

1. The comparative study of religions shows us that men, in general, have always had some knowledge of the Invisible and Infinite. This argues religion to be a need of man's nature. Tylor's theory gives no explanation of this psychological necessity.

2. Animism does not explain the idea of God in the most primitive races, neither does it explain why religion is clearer, simpler, freer from mythical conceptions, as we penetrate more remotely into the past history of the human family.

3. Animism does not explain the numerous cases of religious retrogression. If there is any ascertained fact,

it is the perpetual tendency of peoples to polytheism, fetishism and idolatry; a fact altogether contrary to an evolutionary march toward the most perfect.

4. Animism does not explain the presence of the religious instinct in man, nor of the moral conscience. As the biologist sees himself obliged to refer the origin of life to a power completely surpassing the limits within which his examination is conducted, the evolutionist is likewise forced to suppose these two fundamental bases of all morality as pre-existing before the action of his doctrine began its work.

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(2) P. Radin, Op. Cit., p. 371.
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(4) S. H. Kellogg, The Genesis and Growth of Religion, p. 32.
(5) S. H. Kellogg, Op. Cit., p. 40.
(6) A. A. Goldenweiser, The Knowledge of Primitive Man, Article in The American Anthropologist, Vol. 17, 1915, p. 244.
(7) L. H. Jordan, Comparative Religion, its Genesis and Growth, p. 534.
(8) D. G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples, p. 133.

CHAPTER VI

THE GHOST THEORY

PERHAPS one of the most typical as well as the most ingenious of particularistic theories is Spencer's explanation of the origin of religious belief. It is sometimes called Spencerism, but it is not likely that this will be its permanent name.

Spencer accepted the animistic explanation of primitive thinking. In this respect he agreed quite fully with Tylor, but emphasized that aspect which deals with the spirits of the dead.

We cannot help recognizing Tylor's primitive man in Spencer's delineation of that individual. He says: "The primitive man does not distinguish natural from unnatural, possible from impossible, knows nothing of physical law, order, cause, etc. . . . he lacks fit words for carrying on inquiry, as well as the requisite power of continued thinking. We see that, instead of being a speculator and maker of speculations, he is at first an almost passive recipient of conclusions forced upon him. Further, we find that he is inevitably betrayed into an initial error, and that this originates an erroneous system of thought which elaborates as he advances" (1).

How did this man, who was thus "inevitably betrayed into initial error" ever initiate a religious conception? To this query Mr. Spencer advances the following solution: "First," he says, "the doctrine of evolution will help us to delineate primitive ideas in some of their leading traits. Having inferred, *a priori*, the character of those ideas, we shall be, as far as possible, prepared to realize them in imagination, and then to discern them as actually existing" (2).

How this "imaginary" primitive individual developed a religion is described to us. We can give but a brief synopsis of it here.

Originally, man had no religion. But in his dreams he seemed to see, as still living, persons he knew to be dead. Accepting his dreams at their face value, he supposed that those who had died were still living, though in a different state from that with which they had formerly been associated. From this deduction came the belief in another world, a cult of the dead, and a reverence for those places where the dead were buried. Now it might have happened that the body of some chief was laid away upon the top of a mountain. His soul would then be supposed to be associated with that mountain, and when there was thunder and lightning there, the phenomena would be attributed to him. In this way he would become associated with celestial phenomena, and in course of time, his apotheosis having been forgotten, he would be reverenced as a sky-god.

How the deification of chiefs could have taken place unless people had formed beforehand a name and concept of *god*, Mr. Spencer seems never to have asked himself. ①

In equally ingenious ways, Mr. Spencer shows how belief in spirits in the other phenomena of nature would arise from a simple belief in the continued life of his ancestors. From the polytheism thence resulting monotheism arose through the progressive reduction of beings to whom reverence was paid. According to Spencer's theory the evolution of the idea of God proceeded along this route: a dream, a ghost, a god, the Maker of heaven and earth, Supreme Ruler and Judge of mankind.

It must be admitted that this is certainly candid and clear; whether it is strictly scientific and true to facts is another question. While most anthropologists seem to be of the opinion that Spencer's theory can not be proved, there are a few who have rallied to his support. Among these latter there are three, who deserve to be mentioned: Grant Allen, in his book, *The Evolution of the Idea of God,* Sir Everod im Thurm, in *The Indians of Guiana,* and Professor Leuba in a *Psychological Study of Religion.* The latter is, however, somewhat reserved in his adherence to the theory. But as already intimated the majority seem to think that Spencer has not proved his case.

Very recently a distinguished sociologist, E. Durkheim, maintains that the conception of soul did not have its origin in dreams, visions, and trances, although the conception may be of service in an attempt to account for some of these phenomena (3).

Reville is decidedly antagonistic to the Ghost theory, especially on account of the method by which its author arrives at his conclusions. He writes: "The method employed by the English philosopher to demonstrate his theory consists in gleaning from the abundant accounts of travelers and missionaries such details that are favorable, and systematically neglecting the contrary data. This method may deceive the reader who is not familiar with the vast number of works, of varying competency and merit, that treat of life, customs, and ideas of the uncivilized. But it is a deceptive way of arguing that can be used for all sorts of contrary theses" (4).

In the first place it is assumed that man did not begin his existence as a moral agent possessing the idea of god, but gradually evolved it, and therewith grew into a moral agent. For if man came into existence exclusively by means of natural processes, in the way of natural descent, as is supposed by Mr. Darwin and Mr. Spencer, then it would appear certain that the original mammal which, was the immediate ancestor of man, as we know him, could not all at once have risen to the idea of a First Cause and Moral Ruler of the universe. Hence facts are needed which shall show us how this wonderful evolution of religion and of moral agency proceeded.

But, unfortunately, such facts regarding primitive man, according to Spencer, are wanting, and are likely to remain so. The situation, then, is embarassing. On the one hand is Mr. Spencer's philosophy which compels him to assume that man must have come up from a condition of mere animality by a purely natural process of development; on the other hand are stubborn facts which constrain Mr. Spencer candidly to confess that "most of existing savage races have had ancestors in higher states" (5).

In the second place, if Mr. Spencer is right in assuming that the worship of a personal God is everywhere and always a development from a prior ancestor-worship, then it is plain that the lower the moral intellectual state of any people, the less and less distinct we ought to find the idea of God; while, on the other hand, the worship of ancestors should be by so much the more prominent.

So also it should follow, if Mr. Spencer's theory were true, the more ancient a people,—in other words, the nearer we approach to the days of Mr. Spencer's primitive man—the more we should see of ancestor-worship, and the less of the recognition and worship of God.

"It is not true," says Mr. Kellogg, "that as a rule it is the most degraded tribes who are given to the worship of ancestors. Neither is it true that among such the idea of God is always dim in proportion to the development of ancestor-worship. Mr. Spencer needed to show that the worship of ancestors has been the universal historical antecedent of the worship of God. This he has not proved and it cannot be proved" (6).

Ancestor-worship is very widely distributed, but it is not a universal aspect of primitive cult. It is not found in Australia, where the gods are simply supreme beings who have never died; nor is there any trace of it among such races as the Bushmen, the Andamanese, the Negrillos or the Pygmies; therefore, there is no ground for regarding it, at least not in those regions, as the first form of religion and the source of theistic conceptions. Among nearly all races, even where the worship of ancestors and deified human beings exists, there is also a belief in high gods who have never been men and who have never died. In the process of time mythology has tended to overgrow and choke the original conception of the Creator who dwells in the sky, remote and in need of nothing that man can give.

China and India are often cited as regions of primitive Ghost and Ancestor-worship. It may, therefore, be well to summon expert testimony from these particular areas.

By neglecting the long past of China, when investigating the nature and probable sources of religion, philosophers and critics have missed an important element of information. "Some modern theories," says J. Ross, "would not have been so dogmatically ushered into the world or so readily accepted when published, were the original religion of China familiar to the theorists. The 'ghost theory' of religion would scarcely have been broached, or the statement made that the spiritual form of religion known to us is the result of a long process of evolution from an original image-worship" (7).

The same author continues: "The endeavor to trace the original religion of China to the worship of ancestors or a belief in ghosts, is to rely on a theory which is without a particle of foundation and in direct contrarity to all known facts. For we are ushered in one step into the presence of a religion in which there is One God Supreme over all in heaven and earth, all other spirits being subordinate to Him" (8).

Nowhere is there a hint to confirm the materialistic theory that the idea of God is a later evolutionary product of a precedent belief in ghosts or departed ancestors, or that the belief had arisen indirectly from any other similar source.

According to Mr. Ross we may safely infer that in China "the worship of gods had in its origin as little to do with ancestor-worship as it had in Assyria and Babylonia where ancestor-worship never developed" (9).

India. The deification and worship of dead men is indeed very common in modern India; but it is a fact, which Mr. Spencer ought to know as well as anyone, that the further one goes back in the history of the religions of India, the less there is of this ghost and ancestor-worship, and the clearer and more frequent is the recognition of one God, the Father of all and the Giver of all good. And when we go back to the days most remote in antiquity, before the Vedas were written, when the whole Indo-European race was living, as yet undivided, on the plains of Iran, we find at that time no such state of things as Mr. Spencer's theory would require. There was then no more of the worship of ghosts and ancestors, than in Vedic and post-Vedic days. As Professor Fairbairn has shown, "more clearly recognized then, than ever since, was the idea of one Supreme Being, the Father of all and the Lord of the conscience, Dyaus Pitar, the Heaven-Father, a Person, whose "thou" stood over against the "I" of the worshipper, and no ghost of a dead ancestor seen in feverish dreams" (10).

Another pertinent illustration of our argument is afforded by the history of ancient Egypt. The primitive religion of Egypt presents to Mr. Spencer's theory, as to every other related theory of the history of religion, a most decisive and fatal test. The wonderful progress made of late years in the discovery and decipherment of the literary remains of that most ancient people, enables us to speak with assured confidence. "And what is the testimony of those venerable authorities?" asks Mr. Kellogg. "Was ancestor-worship first, and was the idea of God a late development? Assuredly not! In contradiction to the assertions of Professor Tiele and regardless of the exigencies of Mr. Spencer's theory of religious evolution, M. Renouf has shown most conclusively that the earliest form of Egyptian religion was monotheistic" (11).

Here we might be content to rest the whole case as regards Mr. Spencer's argument, until someone shall have furnished the proof that ever on earth there existed such a race of idiots as the Spencerian "primitive man." All the facts ascertained up to the present day tend to show that man appeared suddenly upon the planet, and then not as a muttering man-monkey, but, in all essential particulars, as really and truly a man, as the man of today. There is not a particle of evidence that such a creature as this hypothetical man ever existed, except in the dreams of the modern naturalistic philosophy.

In conclusion, let it be confirmed once more that the Ghost theory breaks down in almost every particular. One critic makes this final thrust at it: "In order that he may formulate his theory in a manner that proves it, Mr. Spencer has first to make his 'primitive man'; and this man is, of course, a purely imaginary creature, made in the study and after the image of his maker. And the religion attributed to him is as imaginary as himself; for it is put together by a method that knows no order, and follows no law. Time and place, race and racial relations, historical antecedents and conditions, degree of culture and moment of development, are (in the matter of proof and method of treatment) utterly ignored. . . . . His case in no way rests on history or criticism; it is an evolution from consciousness, a theory transcendently deduced, ethnographically illustrated, but in no case historically proved" (12).

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(5) Herbert Spencer, Op. Cit., p. 93.
(6) S. H. Kellogg, Genesis and Growth of Religion, p. 93.
(7) J. Ross, The Original Religion of China, p. 23.
(8) J. Ross, Op. Cit., p. 23.
(9) J. Ross, Op. Cit., p. 69.
(10) A. M. Fairbairn, Studies in Philosophy of Religion and History, p. 43.
(11) S. H. Kellogg, Op. Cit., p. 100.
(12) A. M. Fairbairn, Op. Cit., p. 206.

Chapter VII

THE MAGIC THEORY

THE name of Sir James Frazer is so intimately connected with the Magic theory of the origin of religion that it has come to be called the Frazerian theory. Few if any have devoted more time and scholarship to the study of primitive superstition and religion. His monumental work *The Golden Bough,* will for ages yet to come constitute a veritable mine of information about the beliefs and practices of savage races.

He appears to be in complete agreement with Tylor and Spencer in postulating an era of primitive atheism. But he takes issue with them on the origin of religion. Attacking the question from a different angle, he picks out magical practices as his point of departure and assumes that the belief in spirits or gods was subsequently introduced (1). According to this theory man first tried to control nature by magical means. Then, at some time and place, neither of which is specified by Frazer, men of unusual talents and insight began to appreciate that the current mass of beliefs together with their concomitant modes of procedure or rites were wrong; that people had misinterpreted the world, that they had taken for causes what were no causes, and that nature could not be coerced according to the traditional prescriptions. Out of this insight religion arose. People became humble, conciliatory, and propitiatory, instead of proud, arrogant and coercitive. Sacrifice, prayer and cajolery took the place of abortive attempts at control, and, for the impersonal powers of nature with which magic was wont to concern itself, spirits and gods were substituted with whom the people at once entered into human, or anthropopathic, relations.

In expressing himself on the great transition Frazer rises at times to poetic heights and introduces a charming novelistic narrative into the bewildering facts. "Man," he says, "is still alone with nature and fancies he can sway it at his will. Later on when he discovers his mistake, he will bethink himself of gods and beg them to pull for him the strings that hang beyond his reach" (2).

This, then, is a brief resumé of Frazer's theory. Commenting on this particular theory, Dr. Carpenter points out the fact that Sir Frazer finds himself in unexpected agreement with Hegel, the philosopher, in assuming that magic was the first to appear on the scene (3). But only comparatively few have followed in his steps. J. H. King may be considered the leading protagonist in the English speaking world (4), while Van Gennep is the chief spokesman in Continental Europe (5).

E. Clodd does not give the theory of Magic his unreserved support, but is willing to admit that magical power may be "the germ of later anthropomorphic ideas" (6).

Most ethnologists of the present time are inclined to criticize the Frazerian theory, in fact, so much so, that it is already considered obsolete. It could not, very well, be otherwise.

When the question is raised, for instance: Does man turn to the propitiation of superior powers, only when he cannot get what he wants through magic? The answer,

Propitiation of
Things

based on universal observation, must inevitably be in the negative.

If magic had ever been able to inaugurate religion in, at least, one of the lowest races, the theory, as such, might have vindicated itself, but the most thoroughgoing investigation of primitive culture has failed to produce a single instance of such a process.

Andrew Lang has attacked this theory in a rather caustic way, contending, indeed, that the fundamental proposition might with equal cogency be reversed, and that, instead of arguing that religion has arisen out of the despair of magic, one might say that magic has arisen out of the despair of religion, and that men, having discovered that the gods would neither do their bidding, nor yield to their entreaties, invented magic for the purpose of coercing them.

This latter alternative appeals to Marett and Durkheim as the more plausible explanation.

"Professor Giles, having investigated the question of religion in China, finds no evidence for the pre-existence of magic to religion. Again there is the philosophical impossibility of religion with its cravings after purity, holiness and perfection of life having originated in the operations of sorcerers and medicine men" (7).

In fact, we heartily concur in Lowie's judgment, to wit: "I cannot concede to Frazer's scheme the slightest basis, it seems to me to misrepresent grossly the psychological situation while its historical contentions are equally devoid of validity" (8).

References in Chapter VII

(1) J. Frazer, The Golden Bough, Part III, p. 2.
(2) J. Frazer, the Origin of Totemism, Fortnightly Review, Vol. 65, p. 648, cited by F. Schleiter, Religion and Culture, p. 115.
(3) E. Carpenter, Pagan and Christian Creeds, p. 75.
(4) I. King, The Development of Religion.
(5) A. Van Gennep, Article in Revue des Traditions Populaires, Vol. XIX, 1904, p. 553.
(6) E. Clodd, in Quarterly Review, 1907, p. 183.
(7) Professor Giles, Cited by S. H. Kellogg, The Genesis and Growth of Religion, p. 127.
(8) R. H. Lowie, Cited by B. C. A. Windle, Religions Past and Present, p. 128.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MANA THEORY

ACCORDING to Tylor, primitive man attributed a definite, distinct spirit to the objects of nature, to each mountain and spring and tree in his vicinity.

The theory of spirits, in so far as it purposed to express the first philosophy of nature, is rapidly giving way under the weight of anthropological and psychological data. A large number of competent writers would place another fundamental and universal belief earlier than Tylorian Animism; a belief arising from commoner and simpler experiences than visions based on the existence of an omnipresent, all-pervasive, non-personal power.

Codrington's work *The Melanesians* has generally been considered as the starting-point of this type of theory. Among the Melanesians he found a conception of force which they referred to as *Mana*. And he would define it as a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural, showing itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses.

The Mana conception is assumed to have been the very first stage in the religious experience of mankind. Because it was held to be earlier than Animism, it is often referred to as the Pre-Animistic theory.

R. R. Marett, in his book *The Threshold of Religion*, has perhaps done more than anyone else to popularize this dogma. He held that, to primitive man, nature was characterized by a kind of "aliveness" or power, just as he was conscious of a certain aliveness or power in himself.

According to that interpretation, Tylor's view of religion as a "belief in spiritual beings" was entirely too narrow, in so far as a great many phenomena, which might properly be characterized as religious, were arbitrarily extruded by the definition,—various practices and ideas not involving reference to spirits. Tylor's animism, he believed, was entirely too intellectualistic and unduly neglected the processes of feeling and will. "My own view" he says, "is that savage religion is something not so much thought out, as danced out; that, in other words, it develops under conditions, psychological and sociological, which favor emotional and motor processes, whereas ideation remains relatively in abeyance" (1).

In another chapter of the same book, where he endeavors to push the origin of religion a step farther back than animism, he concludes that "Mana, or rather the Tabu-mana formula, has solid advantages over Animism, when the avowed object is to find what Dr. Tylor calls a minimum definition of religion." His final evaluation of Mana is expressed as follows: "Mana, whilst fully adapted to express the immaterial,—the unseen force behind the scene—yet conformably with the incoherent state of rudimentary reflection, leaves in solution the distinction between personal and impersonal, and in particular, does not allow any notion of high individuality to be precipitated" (2).

Among the North American Indians, the conception of an impersonal spiritual power, closely akin to the Mana of the Melanesians, appear to be quite general. The

Indian's own interpretation of that power is different in the various culture areas. To some, the *Manitou* is primarily a mysterious quasi-mechanical essence, the active element in all that is strange, excellent, or powerful. It is important to note that this quality comes by insensible steps to be identified in many cases with the object or person of which it is the vehicle, so that in the end it may be said to be in a measure personified.

The *Wakan* idea of the Sioux is on a higher plane. Instead of being a vague, indefinite feeling of aliveness in nature all about him, he conceives it as the deification of that peculiar quality or power of which he is conscious within himself as directing his own acts, or willing a course to bring about certain results.

Pre-Animism, then, is not only the earliest stage, but it is the root out of which all later forms of religion have developed. Professor Leuba, a staunch defender of this theory, has this to say: "The original idea of non-personal power possesses but one necessary characteristic: it is dynamic, it does things" (3). He did not think, however, that the term Pre-Animism was really descriptive of the theory. He says: "for that conception of nature which most probably preceded the Tylorian Animism, or at least existed side by side with it, I would suggest the name of Dynamism. This term seems to me preferable to Supernaturalism, because it does not thrust forward a distinction between nature and something above it; and preferable also to Teratism, proposed by Marett, because Dynamism does not direct the attention exclusively to the mysterious and wonderful as if these characteristics were fundamental to the conception. It is the idea of *active power* which is dominant in the conception of Impersonal Force, and this idea is well expressed by Dynamism. I

✓ note

prefer this term also to Manitouism, because Dynamism suggests to most people the idea of power, while Manitouism either is without significance or conveys a meaning not intended" (4).

This, then, is the Mana theory of the origin of religion. It is only fair to say that it was ably advocated from the very first, that its popularity grew so rapidly that it seemed destined to sweep everything before it. But the theory has not been permitted to go unchallenged. Of late a decided reaction has set in. Even some of its ablest defenders seem inclined to share Durkheim's thought on the point of the priority of Pre-Animism that it remains "hésitante et trés reservée" (5).

Among those who have weighed the Mana theory and "found it wanting" we will summon three ethnologists, than whom there is none at the present time, more competent to pass a fair sentence upon it.

W. H. R. Rivers has recently given an exceedingly iconoclastic criticism of the Mana theory, particularly the attempt to found it on the Melanesian data. He holds that the fundamental task of ethnological endeavor is that of cultural analysis which involves the question of the diffusion of features from one area to another, and the statement, in so far as possible, of their historical facts. Applying this method to the interpretation of Melanesian culture, he finds that it does not provide "a suitable basis for these (Mana) speculations"; that the word is not indigenous to Melanesia and may have been borrowed from a people having an advanced animistic religion. Then Rivers concludes: "It is certain that the word *Mana* belongs to the culture of the immigrants into Melanesia and not to that of the aborigines. . . . . The analysis of culture, however, indicates that it is not legitimate to use the Melanesian evidence to support the view that the concept of *Mana* is more primitive than Animism, for the immigrants were already in a very advanced state of animistic religion, a cult of the dead being certainly one of the most definite of their religious institutions" (6).

The American ethnologist, Paul Radin, has made a special and prolonged study of the North American Indians. He knows the red man as perhaps no other white man knows him.

Radin maintains that the *Mana* theorists do not give us either the facts or the Indian's interpretation of them, but having approached their problems from the pre-conceived European metaphysical viewpoint, superimpose it upon the entire material with which they deal. In no case is there a clear presentation of data dissociated from a theory. In those rare instances when an attempt is made to present the facts, they are given in the shape of an appendix to, or illustration of, an interpretation.

In Radin's investigations among the Winnebago and the Ojibwa, he finds that the terms *wakanda* and *manito* are always referred by the Indians to definite spirits, though not necessarily definite in shape. Accordingly he concludes: "We may say, then, that from an examination of the data customarily relied upon as proof, and from individual data obtained, there is nothing to justify the postulation of a belief in a universal force in North America. That magical power is an 'essence' existing apart and separate from a definite spirit, is, we believe, an unjustifiable assumption, an abstraction created by investigators" (7).

Our third and last witness is P. Malinowski, a man who has first-hand knowledge of the Pacific areas. His judgment is considered sane and cautious. He warns us against attaching too much importance to the data supporting the Mana theory. This is his verdict: "The theory of *Mana* as the essence of primitive magic and religion has been so brilliantly advocated and so recklessly handled that it must be realized first that our knowledge of the *Mana* notably in Melanesia, is somewhat contradictory, and especially that we have hardly any data, at all, showing just how this conception enters into religion or magical cult and belief" (8).

While ethnologists, such as these three just referred to, are decidedly hostile to the Mana theory, and its champions appear to feel "hésitants et trés reservés," we may safely conclude that its usefulness as a theory is void and of no importance whatever.

References in Chapter VIII

(1) R. R. Marett, The Threshold of Religion, p. XXXI.
(2) R. R. Marett, Op. Cit., p. 137.
(3) J. H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion, p. 83.
(4) J. H. Leuba, Op. Cit., p. 84.
(5) E. Durkheim, Les Formes Élémentaires de la Vie Religieuse, p. 287, cited by F. Schleiter, Religion and Culture, p. 109.
(6) W. H. Rivers, Ethnological Analysis of Culture, (British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report 1911, p. 494.)
(7) P. Radin, Religion of the North American Indians, (International Congress of Americanists, Vol. 19, p. 277.)
(8) P. Malinowski, Cited by B. C. A. Windle, Religions Past and Present, pp. 34, 35.

CHAPTER IX

NATURISM OR THE NATURE THEORY

ANOTHER hypothesis, held by a considerable number of representatives of the evolutionary school, is that which is known as *Naturism*. It is a theory which marks an advance upon each of its predecessors.

A close scrutiny of Naturism will reveal that it is really a composite theory emanating from two distinctly different sources. One of these may be designated as having its origin in selfish eudaimonism, the other in awe or reverence. It is at the junction of these two conceptions that we have Naturism in its fully developed form.

The following brief analysis of the first source will be sufficient: Religion is not an original nor inseparable element of human nature. In his upward course man begins to observe the various phenomena in nature, the forces of the elements in air, water and sky. It dawns upon him finally that his physical well-being is dependent on these forces. As yet he is devoid of religion and morality, but he is moved in all he does by the sense of need and desire of happiness.

Definition

The need of food is the motive that brings about a change in his attitude to nature. Pure egoist that he was, the early man saw how the powers of nature were able to help or hinder him in his search for a living; the sun could set his plants growing or could burn them up, and the thunderstorm could revive them. His happiness depended on these powers, and he sought to set up relation with them. He sought to gain as an ally the heavenly power that was able to further or to thwart his aims; he made known to it his wishes by calling upon it, he offered presents to it, he worshipped it,—and religion began.

It will be seen that this theory amounts to a mere attempt at bribery of the heavenly powers. In the second place we may note that this theory shares with other theories already investigated the postulation of an original atheism.

The other source, that of reverence and awe, appear to be more plausible, and certainly more attractive. Briefly summarized it is this:—

From the permanent contact of the senses with the infinite sprang the impulse to religion, the first suspicion of something beyond what the senses could apprehend, beyond what reason and language could comprehend.

Primitive man is thought of as pausing before any natural object which might be sufficient to constrain his reverence: a wildly leaping cataract, or a lofty mountain, or the silent over-arching heavens, the powers of nature, so often mysterious, inexplicable, gruesome, strange, frightful, would tend to subdue his thoughts, and arouse in him an emotional response which constitute the core of religion.

The next step is the personification of the natural phenomena. Thunder, lightning, fire, flood and tempest are but so many personal beings. The sun is instinctively regarded as a great personage, and the moon and stars as mother and children, or as shepherd and sheep. From this personification it is easily possible for man to rise to the higher thoughts of God.

This theory is generally connected with the name of the late Max Müller, the distinguished Indianist, though there are others who favor it more than he. Max Müller held, for instance, that if primitive man had a belief in higher divinities, it was in consequence of an error due to a "corruption of language"; since the ancient Indo-Germanic tongues have terminations to express the gender of nouns, the word heaven, earth, sea, rain, etc., soon passed for living beings and were classed with one or the other sex.

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This theory no longer has any partisans. The chief objection against it is that it does not apply to many of the languages of the world.

Apart from the fact that Max Müller postulated "a religious faculty" in man, in virtue of which, it is possible for him to attain to a definite conception of God as revealed in nature, his theory was shared in the main by most of the German scholars. Its chief protagonist in that country is Dr. Otto Pfleiderer. Reville, the Frenchman, Van Gennep, the Belgian, and Menzies, the Englishman, are known as the main supporters of the theory in their respective countries.

We think this theory of Naturism has more points in favor of it than some of those that have been mentioned, but it must be dismissed for several weighty reasons.

In the first place, there is nothing to show that such ideas as those expressed by Max Müller ever entered into the minds of prehistoric races. In the second place, we know that there are a number of existing peoples who neither have nor apparently ever have had any such form of religious belief.

According to Hopkins, "the chief objections to the theory are that it assumes in the savage a too pronounced tendency toward personification and that man's attitude toward natural phenomena is made the base of all religion" (1).

Another serious objection to Max Müller's idea is that it is based on a fundamentally false theory of knowledge. He constantly insists that all knowledge, whether religious or any other, in the last analysis, is derived from the sense-perceptions, and comes through the senses only. Of any intuitive perception, intellectual or moral, or of the distinction of right and wrong, he would have nothing.

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(1) E. W. Hopkins, Origin and Evolution of Religion, p. 4.

CHAPTER X

THE FETISH THEORY

FETISH: "A material object believed to be the dwelling of a spirit that may be induced or compelled to help the possessor to achieve his aims and safeguard him in their pursuit and to protect him from harm or disease" (1).

The use of the word as denoting a religious cult goes back to de Brosses, (1760) who supposed that certain customs of the West Africans constituted the earliest form of primitive religion. The term itself is derived from the Portuguese 'feitico' (charm or amulet), and is used very loosely. Comte made it equivalent to animism. Others meant by it the embodiment of departed spirits in some tangible or visible form. The criticism of Dr. Schleiter appears to be justified when he says: "that the term 'fetishism,' in the profuse literature on the subject, has been used with great poetic license and bewildering ambiguity and has been applied in a loose way to a body of phenomena whose character and extent are not limited or well defined. The central or nuclear symptom of fetishism commonly connoted is a magico-religious attitude toward an inanimate object. The psychological processes, however, in a number of different cases may be so diverse and non-comparable as to render the use of a single term to comprehend them exceedingly unjustifiable and positively misleading" (2).

On one point, however, there is no difference of opinion among those who have studied fetishism at close quarters. All agree that it is a very low form of religion. Many treat it, if not as the primitive religion of mankind, at least as that form which we find among men at the lowest stage of development known to us. Others feel that it is a backward step from a form of religion which was developing in the right direction.

Fetishism is another one of those theories that have been "weighed in the balance and found wanting." It seems to be so definitely abandoned today, that none is likely to have the hardihood to come forward and offer to "break a lance" in its defense.

The old argument about the West Africans proved to be a boomerang. It has been shown conclusively that fetishes are *not* the gods of those natives. They worship tribal deities and have a surprisingly clear conception even of a Supreme Being, ruler and creator of the world.

weakness of theory

As far as India is concerned, there is not a single fact to show that the progress of religious thought has been upward from an earlier fetishism to a more enlightened type of faith, but the exact reverse. Mr. Max Müller remarks that: "stones, bones, shells, herbs, and all other so-called fetishes, are simply absent in the old hymns, though they appear in the more modern hymns, particularly those of the Atharva-Veda. When artificial objects are mentioned and celebrated in the Rig-Veda, they are only such as might be praised even by Wordsworth or Tennyson—chariots, bows, quivers, axes, drums, sacrificial vessels and similar objects" (3).

note

The final conclusion of Max Müller is a categorical denial that fetishism could ever have been an original religious product, or that man could ever pass from having no religion to the religion of fetishism.

The same is true of China. The famous sinolog of the last century, James Legge, has found no trace of fetishism in early Chinese society (4).

It could perhaps be argued that the two authorities just quoted might have been prejudiced against the theory for personal reasons. Among other witnesses against whom this charge can not be preferred we would cite Spencer and Menzies.

Herbert Spencer says: "How untenable is the idea that fetishism comes first among the superstitions, will now be manifest. Suppose that by Juangs, Andamanese, Fuegans, Australians, Tasmanians, and Bushmen, the worship of inanimate objects were carried to the greatest extent; that among tribes a little advanced in intelligence and social state it was somewhat restricted; that it went on decreasing as knowledge and civilization increased; and that in highly developed societies, such as for example, those of ancient Peru and modern India, it became inconspicuous. Should we not say that the statement that fetish-worship was the original form of religion, was conclusively proved? Clearly then, as the facts happen to be exactly the opposite, the statement is conclusively disproved" (5).

Dr. A. Menzies would be willing to give the theory the benefit of everything that might possibly be found in its favor. But there are certain grave difficulties that present themselves, making it impossible to grant it a new lease of life. He says: "Why should the savage make a god of a stick or a stone, and attribute to it supernatural powers? Who told him about a god, that he should call a stick a god, or about supernatural powers, that he should suppose a stick to work wonders? There is nothing in the stick to suggest such notions; that he should make gods in this way, that the belief in wonderful powers should originate in this way, is surely quite incredible. Much more likely it is, surely, that he got the notion of God from some other quarter and applied it in his own grotesque and degraded way, than that the notion of God was taken first from such poor forms and applied afterwards to objects better suited to it" (6). Among the opponents of this theory we may mention also the following prominent scholars: L. H. Jevons (7), D. G. Brinton (8), and S. H. Kellogg (9).

References in Chapter X

(1) Definition in Funk and Wagnall's New Standard Dictionary.
(2) F. Schleiter, Religion and Culture, p. 25.
(3) Max Müller, Cited by Andrew Lang, Myth, Ritual and Religion, p. 217.
(4) J. Legge, The Religions of China, p. 20.
(5) H. Spencer, Principles of Sociology, Vol. I, pp. 317, 318.
(6) A. Menzies, History of Religion, p. 35.
(7) F. B. Jevons, Introduction to the History of Religion, pp. 126, 127, 135.
(8) D. G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples, p. 133.
(9) S. H. Kellogg, The Genesis and Growth of Religion, p. 50 et seq.

CHAPTER XI

THE TOTEMIC, OR SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

DISCUSSING the early religion of the Semites, W. Robertson Smith maintained that primitive religion was the special interest of the community rather than that of the individual.

This view was taken up and developed by the brilliant French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, in his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* It may be termed a socio-psychological interpretation of religion. His argument embraces the following fundamental propositions: nature as such, can not inspire the religious emotions; religion can not, in the last analysis, be based on an illusion, but must be rooted in concrete reality, derived from experience. According to him, the true primitive man was in the state of passive atheism, spoken of by Herbert Spencer, and he would have remained in that state indefinitely, had he not yielded to his instinct of becoming united in society. Theoretically an isolated man is incapable of religion. note But the exalting influence exercised by uniting in a crowd, gave him a glimpse of a new world—the world of "sacred things," which is, after all, simply the more or less vague feeling of social strength. Keen emotions, however, tend to crystalize into a symbol. This symbol, this rallying sign, this banner, was, for the primitives, *a totem.* At first it was created spontaneously, without anyone being able to foresee the useful role it might play. Naturally, this emblem would be chosen from the species of beings most closely related to man, first animals, then plants, then other objects. One general idea dominates the primitive world: the idea of consubstantiality of things, the interpenetration of all beings, and consequently a sort of moral and physical force spread throughout all. In other words, it is the "totemic divinity" of which the totems are symbols, and of which human souls are the fragments. The idea of the soul begets the idea of the spirit, which easily leads to that of a divinity ruling over the entire tribe. Then came the ceremonies, making their beliefs more vivid and precise.

Le Roy, when explaining the Durkheim theory, says: "*Thus understood, the divinity is nothing else than society itself;* its reality as well as its necessity, coming only from the fact that it is a mode of collective representation" (1). This is the "French theory," as it is called, in honor of Mr. Durkheim, its chief author.

We find, however, that the totemic conception is much too varied to be satisfactorily accounted for by that particular theory. It is most probable that totemism started from many different origins in different regions and developed certain comparable characteristics through a process of convergence.

According to Sir Frazer, "totemism may be explained as arising from a connection by association between a child and an animal, which follows when the animal has been seen by a woman at the moment of a quickening" (2). While this may have been a factor, it would not seem sufficiently important to account for the origin of the cult.

Another factor contributing to the rise of totemism is the physical cravings of man. Hunger and thirst of the body have played a great part in establishing primitive religions, according to the opinion of E. W. Hopkins.

He avers that "the root of totemism is hunger, and the root of the cult of divine intoxicants is thirst" (3).

The evolution of religion would be explained somewhat along this line: The clan needs food. Getting food is a mysterious operation; food is an animate volitive thing; it may not want to come. But it can be urged, the vital power of the food is half commanded, half entreated to reproduce itself, to become more. The food-giver becomes the divinity. The clan becomes a worshipper of that which provides it with sustenance, regarding it as a being which is at once father and mother, worthy of the greatest respect. Gradually this respect develops into reverence and worship. And thus religion comes into existence.

Whether one inclines to Durkheim's theory or to that of the "hunger-origin," it is evident that religion is not a supernatural affair, nor does it imply a belief in divine things. The social relations and the physical requirements explain everything, with no relation to anything supernatural.

The Totemistic origin of religion is no longer regarded as tenable by the greater number of ethnologists. The most recent researches have not sustained the attempts to make totemism the stage through which all primitives have (1) passed. There are large areas over which no signs of totemic organizations are found; and many phenomena which were formerly assumed to be proofs of totemism in the higher religions of antiquity, in Egypt, Greece, and other regions, now receive other explanations. Even among the Central Australian tribes the totems are not worshipped. They are in no sense deities, no prayers or sacrifices are offered to them.

Refutation

But the fundamental objection to this theory is that it ignores or minimizes beyond reason the individual in favor (2) of the group. While it must be admitted that religious ideas in general reflect a man's habitat or group, it is a serious error to imagine that the habitat or group in which he is born produces his religious state of mind. The French theory does not hesitate to insist that man does not think at all as an individual; that there is no such thing as an individual mentality and, consequently, all religious thought is social.

An American scholar whom we have been privileged to quote on a former occasion, has made a special study of the subject. We refer to Dr. Lowie. He disposes of the theory in such a thorough way that it seems to be hopelessly doomed to oblivion. Thus his final '*coup de grâce*': "We shall content ourselves with putting the ax to the root of the theory. It is ethnographically unwarranted to deduce primeval conceptions from Australian conditions. The Australians are not so primitive as, certainly not more primitive in their culture than, the Andaman Islanders, the Semang of the Malay Peninsula, or the Paviotso of Nevada. In these sociologically simplest tribes totemism does not occur. Totemism is a widespread, but far from universal phenomenon, while the belief in spiritual beings is universal; precisely these rudest tribes, which have a decisive bearing on the question are non-totemic animists. (3) Hence the notion of spirit cannot be derived from totemism. Moreover, the totemic ideas of the Australians represent a highly localized product and cannot even be accepted as the earliest form of totemism" (4).

References in Chapter XI

(1) A. LeRoy, Religion of Primitives, p. 77.
(2) J. Frazer, Totemism and Exogamy, Vol. I., pp. 156 et seq.
(3) E. W. Hopkins, Origin and Evolution of Religion, p. 100.
(4) R. H. Lowie, Primitive Religion, pp. 113, 114.

CHAPTER XII

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY

See p. 74

THE theories investigated thus far have not proved adequate. May there be any other way by which the problem of origin can be solved?

Ours is the age of Psychology. Whenever a new science begins to establish its position it casts a glamor of endless possibilities. It will be called on to solve all the preplexing questions of mankind. Psychology had no sooner made its debut than it was applied to all the mental, moral and religious behavior in society and in the individual.

This accounts for the appearance of the Psychological theory of religion.

We intend to show that of all the theories passed in review before our eyes, this one seems to be the most reasonable, even though we may not share the enthusiasm of the late Dr. Brinton. He was convinced that "every advanced student of religion will subscribe to the declaration . . . . that all mythology and all history of belief must finally turn to psychology for their satisfactory elucidation" (1).

The defenders of the theory have split into two opposite a) camps. Some contend that religion is the product of a materialistic evolution, while others feel compelled to assume, if not a religious instinct, at least an innate b) tendency toward religion.

Among the former we quote Professor Leuba as the leading champion. He maintains very dogmatically that there is nothing essentially divine or supernatural in the making of religion. "The beliefs in the existence of agents—ghosts, personified natural phenomena, creators, —with whom man feels himself in practical relations are unavoidable beliefs, that arise naturally from a normal use of ordinary mental powers" (2). The God he seeks is in man himself; man being at the same time the subject and the object of religion.

Solomon Reinach, foremost leader among the French advocates of this view, says: "Unless we admit the gratuitous and puerile hypothesis of a primitive revelation, we must look for the origin of religions in the psychology, not of civilized man, but of man the farthest removed from civilization. Of this man, anterior to all history, we have no direct knowledge, beyond what we glean from the implements and artistic products of the quaternary period. True, these teach us something, but, equally true, they teach us far less than we could wish. To supplement our information, three other sources have to be tapped: The psychology of the present-day savage, the psychology of children, and the psychology of the higher animals" (3).

The above views represent the more radical or "materialistic" conception of religion. The more "spiritual" party is by far the stronger in numbers, and reflect various shades of opinions.

We may consider Dr. Brinton a fair representative of the latter group. He starts out with this categorical declaration: "In the nature and laws of the human mind, in its intellect, sympathies, emotions and passions, lie the well-springs of all religions, modern or ancient, Christian or heathen" (4).

With this major premise, he goes on to show that "religion does not begin from any external pressure, no matter how strong this may be. It must start in the soul itself" (5).

Again: "The sources of mythology are psychic. The strange similarity in myths of savage nations far apart in space and kinship is not due to borrowing or a recollection from a common remote unity; but in the laws of the human mind. The same myths are found all over the world, with the same symbolism and imagery, woven into cycles dealing with the same great questions of human thought. This is because they arise from identical psychic sources" (6).

The logic of Dr. Brinton does not stop at any obstacles: "All the dramas of the Universe, Creation, the Fall, Deluge, etc., are all necessary results of the higher unity of the mind of man" (7).

A somewhat more conservative view is expressed by Dr. Farnell. He is of the opinion that through the present societies of savage men "there prevails an extraordinary uniformity, in spite of the local variation, in ritual and mythology, a uniformity so striking as to suggest belief in an ultimately identical tradition, or perhaps, more reasonably, the psychological theory that the human brain-cell in different races at the same stage of development responds with the same religious speech or the same religious act to the same stimuli supplied by its environment" (8).

But what, after all, is the cause of this "extraordinary uniformity"? To say it is a psychological reaction, is a good modern phrase, but it does not explain it. Max Müller, it will be recalled, spoke of a "religious faculty," but very few agreed with him at the time. Others would designate it as "religious instinct," though the psychology of the present day is rather skeptical about the very existence of instinct of any kind. Dr. Leuba, at any rate, will have none of it in the composition of religion (9).

To assume that man has drawn his beliefs, his practices, his morals, his religious organizations from his own inner depths, must be proved. And the arguments in favor of it thus far have failed to prove it. To an outsider it looks like "arguing in a circle."

There are others,—ethnologists of note—, who challenge the very foundation upon which the theory is based. We may mention Elliot Smith, Dr. Rivers, Mr. Perry and others, who practically deny the doctrine of the independent origin of customs and beliefs. Elliot Smith thinks that "inventiveness and originality are qualities so exceptional that whenever similar cult-practices or myths are found in different parts of the earth, the only possible explanation is to regard them as evidence of race-contact" (10). Thus he denies altogether the possibility that cultural or mythological resemblances may be due to the common tendencies of the human mind, called into play by similar conditions.

Reinach's "three other sources of information" have met with indifferent success. Le Roy is perhaps the most uncompromising in his attitude to Reinach's views. To quote: "Let us leave to Reinach a task too delicate for our feeble means of information, the interrogation of gorillas on their religious convictions; let us spare the children, and content ourselves with the savages" (11).

Dr. Goldenweiser summons four witnesses against the psychological theory, Tylor, Spencer, Levy-Bruhl and Durkheim, "who, though they agree that the intellectual potentialities of the savage are not markedly, if at all, different from our own, nevertheless insist that his thinking is very different indeed" (12).

Referring to Dr. Brinton's categorical dictum that "all the dramas of the Universe are necessary results of the higher unity of the mind of man" (13), it is our intention to propose another solution, based on other premises.

References in Chapter XII

(1) D. G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples, p. 6.
(2) J. H. Leuba, A. Psychological Study of Religion, p. 9.
(3) S. Reinach, Cults, Myths and Religions, page v in Introduction.
(4) D. G. Brinton, Op. Cit., p. 30.
(5) D. G. Brinton, Op. Cit., p. 40.
(6) D. G. Brinton, Op. Cit., pp. 117, 118.
(7) D. G. Brinton, Op. Cit., pp. 122, 123.
(8) L. R. Farnell, Evolution of Religion, p. 9.
(9) J. H. Leuba, Op. Cit., p. 9.
(10) Elliot Smith, cited by E. O. James, Primitive Ritual and Belief, p. 181.
(11) A. Le Roy, The Religion of Primitives, p. 26.
(12) A. A. Goldenweiser, The Knowledge of Primitive Man, (Article in American Anthropologist, 1915, Vol. 17, p. 240.)
(13) D. G. Brinton, Op. Cit., p. 123.

CHAPTER XIII

Monotheism

GENERAL DISCUSSION

IT IS our profound conviction that none of the theories advanced thus far can be judged satisfactory for the solution of the origion of religion. To let the matter rest at what seems to be an impassé, is, if anything, still more unsatisfactory, and no student of comparative religion, who is led up against a blank wall, can be expected to remain there very long.

Most investigators will do one of two things. Either they will admit frankly, as does Dr. Soper, that the proposed theories do not solve the problem, and give up in despair (1), or they will make at least one more attempt by an entirely different route.

Personally, we think that Reinach was on the right track when he proposed to "go to the present-day savage" for his source of information. Only his premises were so hopelessly false that there could be no satisfactory conclusion.

The fact that all the primitive races have a religion of some sort, has already been alluded to as a dogma generally conceded by the ethnologists of our day.

But the study of primitive religion has brought out another rather surprising fact: the universality of the belief in a *Supreme God*, a Sky-God, One above all gods, above all visible and invisible creatures. This High-God among low races has caused no end of speculation and worry in the camp of the investigators. The initial tactics was to deny his existence, but facts are stubborn things. The High-God was still there and refused to "do the disappearing act."

It may be asserted now that very few students of religion will dare to deny the existence of this strange phenomenon of a Supreme Being in every race and cult. We may, however, call attention to two men whose courage is more to be admired than the views they express. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, Menzies declares that, "For a theory of primitive monotheism the supreme gods of the savages certainly do not furnish sufficient evidence" (2).

W. Wundt denies very energetically the existence of a primitive monotheism. "There is no more any primitive monotheism than there is a primitive State. Primitive monotheism does not exist because there is no such a thing as a primitive religion" (3).

Dr. Soper speaks for the majority of the ethnologists, when he says: "Monotheism is there, but we do not know how it arose" (4). Paul Radin is still more outspoken, when he claims the origin of monotheism "antedates even the Neanderthal man" (5).

Granted, then, that monotheism, more or less vague, is found to be the common possession of mankind; the next question that will press for an answer is its present relation to past ages. We may put it this way: The conception of a Supreme God, is it the first flush of the dawn, or is it the last lingering rays of a dying day?

It is evident that the evolutionist's philosophy will assume the first alternative as the only possible proposition. As long as consistency is believed in on the part of that school, this is the only view that can be held. The opposite would invite disaster to the whole system.

Whether the monotheism, as it is found today is a product of a gradual evolution, or the result of a process of degeneration is not something we may dismiss or approve on purely *a priori* grounds. The history of religion is limited to historical facts and the inference that can be drawn from them. For history, therefore, the question is, whether among the facts which it recognizes and with which it deals, there are any which indicate that monotheism is the earliest form of religious belief that it can discern. This procedure should be applied to all those ancient cultures whose records have come down to us in the form of literature or inscriptions, such as those from China, India, Egypt and the classical East.

Assuming, however, that there are long periods of time antedating the earliest histories of those nations, we realize that the nature of the religion of the peoples in the gray mist of antiquity is one which cannot be historically determined by direct testimony. We can only arrive at a decision of this question by way of inference from facts at present known. Such a method is capable of at least conducting us to a conclusion which shall have a high degree of probability. If, in the historical investigation, the farther back we go, the more, as a general rule, we find monotheism disappearing, and the lower forms of religious faith, such as worship of fetishes, of ancestors, or of nature, becoming more and more prominent, then certainly such a method will prove to us that monotheism is a relatively late development. If investigation fails to support that view, if there is evidence that the concept of an omnipotent Being appear brighter and brighter the farther back we go into the distant past, the conclusion will obviously be in favor of original monotheism.

However, when we wish to investigate this phase of religion among the present-day savages or lower races, we may have no written records of their beliefs as our sources of information. Lacking the historical documents, there still remain at our disposal several avenues of approach. There is scarcely a tribe, no matter how remote from civilization, but that it has been thoroughly studied by specialists in ethnology, folklore, myths and cults. The researches of modern travellers, and especially missionaries, who have lived for years in daily intercourse with such people, have in recent years cast a flood of light upon this subject.

The first thing we note is that "the god of the savage is a living god, the source of life, its creator, preserver and sustainer" (6). While the "All-Father" concept is (1) at the base of practically all the cosmogonic mythology of the world, we find, at the same time, that the term never signifies progenitor but creator.

Some will maintain that the form of polytheism and polydaemonism do not really point to an originally pure faith. They do not see how it is probable that a people at one period monotheistic could lose it to such an extent as apparently is the case among some races.

Jevons is cognizant of this same difficulty, but still he admits that: "It may well be that the figures of these high gods standing out from the low growth of polytheism or polydaemonism that surrounds them are survivals (2) from an earlier period. The fact that they have personal names proves that they are figures of some antiquity. We may even indulge in the conjecture that they are survivals from a period of belief in one God alone" (7).

May we not also draw the inference that if it be thus possible for modern savage tribes, to have the concept of one invisible, spiritual, supreme God; then, even if the (3) primitive man was no higher than they, such a belief may ✓ have been possible to him too, and his religion may not, after all, have originated in the blundering of superstitious ignorance.

One of the best known anthropologists in Europe is Father Schmidt, the editor of the "Anthropos" and at present connected with the Vatican Library. He has made a special study of some of the lowest races, such as the Andamanese, Australians and Pygmies. And his findings are considered fair and conclusive.*

The theories of Father Schmidt have been discussed by our own Professor Lowie, and, although he does not yield his unqualified support to those theories, he finds them plausible. He says: "First of all he [Father Schmidt] assumes an archaic culture now only represented by the very rudest peoples, whose faith is characterized 1. positively by a belief in a high-god, by the union of religion ✓ and ethics, and the beginnings of prayer and ritual, while negatively the lack of ancestor-worship and magic I are noteworthy criteria. Upon this common substratum three diverse structures were reared in mutual independence,—the horticultural, the totemic, and the pastoral. 2. Horticulture was a feminine invention and produced a corresponding social preponderance of the female sex, which found expression in matrilineal descent and in worship of a female deity, the moon. A- Animism and an ancestral cult also arose, largely in connection with a revolt of the masculine under-dog, which led to the organization of men's associations, that is, secret societies designed to curb woman's power. B- In the second, totemic culture which evolved elsewhere, masculine precedence was mirrored in the adoration of a solar deity of male sex; totemic beliefs and the excessive reliance on magic, as contrasted with archaic dependence on a high-god, were significant features. Finally, pastoral nomadism adhered more tenaciously to primeval monotheism; C. neither sun nor moon, but a sublime heaven-god, the Jahve of the Semites and the Dyaus Pitar of Indo-Germanic peoples, occupied the first place among divine beings. As for the subsequent events in the history of religion, they were the results of interaction among these primary differentiations of the archaic culture" (9).

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*We quote the original: "Ce qu'on pouvait démontrer chez les divers peuples, c'étaient les vestiges d'un monothéisme, et en particulier d'un monothéisme éthique. Il importe maintenant d'examiner, si c'étaient des vestiges, des reliques d'un fonds monothéiste autrefois plus riche, ou des faibles embroyons vers une évolution féconde pour l'avenir.

"Cette preuve resulte du fait que, presque partout ou l'on reconnaît encore un Être supérieur, celui-ci mène une vie plus ou moins oisive et n'est pas l'objet d'un culte pronouncé, bien que son existence soit admise *par tous.* Ce-ci indique un effacement progressif de cet Être, car si son existence reposait sur des opinions nouvellement formées, celle-ci seraient d'abord l'apanage *d'une minorité,* qui les embrasserait en revanche avec toute la ferveur propre aux néophytes. Ceux-ci les auraint répandues plus loin et tout le culte, jusque là en usage, se serait concentré sur ce seul Être suprème.

"Aujourd'hui on peut énumérer toute une série de peuples de la plus basse civilisation qui en vertu de la théorie dominante, représentent encore la plus ancienne étape de l'évolution de l'humanité, et chez lesquel le monothéisme éthique est encore tellement en vigeur que même des adversaires de l'animisme, à ce qu'il paraît, en ont acceuilli les détails avec un certain scepticisme" (8).

The theory is plausible as well as interesting. At any rate it does not run counter to the idea of an original monotheism. But it will serve our purpose best to ignore theories,—even the most plausible—and content ourselves with the facts found in history and in recent investigations of present-day savages.

We shall, accordingly, summon as witnesses, first the historic nations of antiquity; then, the representatives of the lower races as they still exist among us.

References in Chapter XIII

(1) E. D. Soper, Religions of Mankind, p. 63.
(2) A. Menzies, History of Religion, p. 35.
(3) A. Wundt, Völker-Psychologie, Vol. II, p. 233.
(4) E. D. Soper, Op. Cit., p. 63.
(5) P. Radin, Primitive Man as Philosopher, p. 372.
(6) D. G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples, p. 69.
(7) F. B. Jevons, Comparative Religion, p. 120.
(8) W. Schmidt, L'Origine de l'Idée de Dieu, Anthropos, 1908, pp. 367, 368.
(9) R. H. Lowie, Primitive Religion, p. 168.

Puts the various ancient races on
the stand to give witness to
monotheism as the beginning God!
of a religious concept of a

CHAPTER XIV

Ethnic Monotheism

THE MONGOLIAN RACE

CHINA

IN SPEAKING of the Chinese, let us bear in mind that we speak of one fourth of the human family.

The religion of the ancient Chinese has scarcely received the attention it merits. When other ancient nations were comparatively young, China had a mature civilization and a religious faith, well developed, systematically and intelligently set forth, and universally accepted by the people of the country.

The canonical history, as accepted and transmitted by Confucius, dates from the Emperor *Yao*, (2357-2255, B. C.), It is told of him that he built a temple to God. That his successor *Shun* (2255—2205, B. C.) "offered the customary sacrifices to God" (1).

Admittedly this is a strange statement. Made without any introduction, preface or explanation, it implies an unknown series of antecedent events running back into the darkness of remote antiquity. The "customary sacrifices" distinctly point to offerings made continuously by generation after generation in the unsounded depths of the past. "One cannot escape the conclusion," says Ross, "that in the time of Shun these religious observances were of old standing" (2).

They called their god Shang-ti. But we fail to find a hint at anything as to *how* or *when* the idea of the great

Shang-ti originated, or by what process it came into use. The name bursts suddenly upon us from the very first page of history without any warning. No attempt is made to explain the origin of the religious conception. The existence of God, the possibility of entering into communion with Him, were tenets assumed as well-known and of common acceptation.

From the *Book of History* and *The Odes*, we glean statements such as these: "The Superior Ruler is one and indivisible." "He is incapable of change." "He has no equal and can have no second, who can compare with Him. He rules absolutely and solely over all in heaven above and on earth beneath." "His will is always right. He is tolerant and just." "By His decrees kings are made and rulers execute judgment. In His hands are the issues of life and death."

It was to this Supreme Deity that all the highest forms of adoration were offered in those remote days. The phrase "heaven and earth," and its corresponding duality "Yang and Yin" were unknown in that early period. There was no image of any shape nor idol worship of any kind (3).

Dr. Legge tells us that "there is not a word in the sacred books, Shŭ and Shîh, about the sacrifice to other spirits implying that there was one among them equal or second to, or more than a servant of Shang-ti" (4). He reaches (1) the conclusion that "five thousand years ago the Chinese were monotheists,—not henotheists, but monotheists—" he repeats (5).

The fact that in the first historical allusion to religious matter in China, we find traces of theological ideas which seem to conflict with the original monotheism, does not weaken the force of the argument as to the purity of the original conceptions, since these ideas are exhibited as of the nature of new developments; and the incongruity between the earlier and the later practices (where the spirits presiding over the phenomena of Nature, and the manes of deceased worthies, are admitted to a share in the worship offered to the deity) may be explained as analogous to the veneration of saints in the Catholic Church which is found to exist *pari passu* with a profound belief in the unity of the Godhead.

But whence came the original conception? Was it the mature result of ages of speculation, or was it brought down from remote antiquity on the stream of patriarchal tradition? In the earlier books of the Chinese there is no trace of speculative inquiry. They raise no question as to the nature of Shang-ti, or the grounds of faith in such a being, but in their first pages they allude to him as already well-known.

(1) It is impossible to say what form of religion was found in China in the millenniums antecedent to the historical period. What we do know is that five thousand years ago there was a comparatively pure monotheism. Considering the exceptional conservatism of the Chinese, we are justified in making the inference that there was not at any time in the experience of this people a worship more materialistic and degraded than that indicated in their history. Hence, it is fair to conclude that monotheism was original and co-eval with their existence as a race.

KOREA

Having considered the religions of China, it may be just as well to include in the present chapter the beliefs of her neighbors to the north and east. These peoples are related to the Chinese both racially and culturally, and we may expect some similarity in their religion.

The religion of Korea, as we find it today, is a low form of spirit-worship composed of animism, shamanism and nature-cult generally. But it was not always thus.

The oldest known Korean record quoted in the Tong-guk-tong-gam and Tong-sa-chan-yo states that in primeval ages there was a divine Being named Wanin, who was the (2) Chai-so (Creator). This record goes back to the legendary king, Tangun, who is said to have reigned in Korea 2332 B. C. There is absolutely no mention of any spirit-worship in that early period.

When Kija came, in the year 1122 B. C. to the reign of what is now Pyeng Yang, history tells us that he introduced, among other superstitions, also "spirit-worship." The only inference we may draw from this statement is, that spirit-worship, which is the real religion at the present time, was unknown in those days.

Commenting on this particular feature, Dr. Underwood, a recognized authority on things Korean, asks: "from these antique monuments and this historic retrospect, can we not conclude that here also there is a strong probability of a primitive pure monotheism?" (6).

It would appear from recent investigations that traces of the monotheism of ancient Korea are still to be found among the people. Professor Hulbert may be quoted: "Strange to say, the purest religious notion which the Korean today possesses is the belief in *Hananim*, a being entirely unconnected with either of the imported cults and as far removed from the crude nature-worship. This word Hananim is compounded of the words 'heaven' (2) (sky) and 'master,' and is the pure Korean counterpart of the Chinese 'Lord of Heaven.' The Koreans all consider this being to be the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. He is entirely separated from and outside the circle of the various spirits and demons that infest all nature. Considered from this standpoint, the Koreans are strictly monotheists and the attributes and powers ascribed to this being are in such consonance with those of Jehovah that the foreign missionaries (Protestants) have almost universally accepted the term for use in teaching Christianity" (7).

Note The conclusion, therefore, may be drawn that in the dawn of history, China and her little neighbor, Korea, worshipped the same God in the same way. ✓

CENTRAL ASIA

This is a rather indefinite term, but we mean to include the various other Mongolian peoples in addition to those already noted.

As far back as the thirteenth century, Plano Carpini relates in his "Historia Mongolorum" that "The Mongols believe in one God, whom they regard as the Creator of all things visible and invisible."

Rubruquis also remarks that the "Mongols acknowledge the existence of one God, but that, despite this, they (3) prepare idols for themselves." Similarly the Arabian historians mention the "One God" of the Mongols, whom, according to a decree of Jenghiz Khan, all the subjects of the Great Khan had to honor and worship" (8).

One might perhaps assume the above reports of a "One God" to have been colored in some way or other, but on closer acquaintance with the beliefs of the Central Asian peoples, it is found that the "One" God, the God of Heaven, has actually had an exceptional position among them.

"A word of their own language," says the authority just quoted, "used by the Mongols as a name for their 'One God,' is Tengri, a name used for the Heaven god in many other Altaic languages. The 'Eternal Tengri,' who rules the world and decrees the fates of peoples and individuals, does seem to be a spiritual entity" (9).

JAPAN

The Japanese witness to monotheism is vague and far from satisfactory. So much of Japanese history is sheer legend, and so much of her old religion is fantastic fables, that very little can be found upon which to base a rational conjecture. Of late years a serious attempt has been made by some of the best scholars of the country to conduct a thorough investigation into the labyrinth of Japanese cults and legends.

Professor Kumi, a native student, has brought to light evidence which clearly proves that primitive Shinto differed very materially from that of today. He maintains that originally the Mikados were not considered deities or even divine, dating the deification of the Mikados (and that at first only after death) much later. He also claims that the temples to the sun-goddess were originally shrines for the worship of Heaven. (4)

The most thoroughgoing inquiry along this line has been conducted by Dr. Kokehi of the Imperial University of Tokyo. We quote from the "Transactions of the Asiatic Society for Japan," May 1922, Vol. XLIX, Part II: "The first deity mentioned in the Kojiki [the oldest records of Japan] is Ame-no-mi-naka-nushi-no-kami, that is: Deity-August-Lord-of-the-Center-of-Heaven."

Kokehi declares that this deity is identical with the great Life of the Universe.

Thus, at the very beginning of Japanese history, the great spirit which Kokehi makes central in his modern world view was known, named and worshipped by the Japanese people. It is claimed for this first god "that he existed both in and above the empirical universe. He is both immanent and transcendent. Dwelling above the phenomenal universe of human experience, he is yet a most intimate and inseparable part thereof. He possesses the attributes of *doji-dosho* 'same-time-same-place' yet although existing in all times and in all places, he is nevertheless superior to temporal spatial limitations."

"The designation, *Naka,* 'center or middle' in the title of this deity is not to be taken as indicating localization in a central place in heaven. Centrality is referable to him, not in physical spatial sense, but in the sense that all depends on him. He is without beginning, without end, without increase, without decrease. He is the unaltering basis and background of flux in the phenomenal world, transcending all change" (10).

The two deities Isanagi and Isanami are a much later progeny of gods. They are mentioned as being the sixteenth in the list of gods, and seem to be of Polynesian importation.

No shrine has ever been erected to the earliest god of Japan.

Among others who have found traces of primitive monotheism in the most ancient Japanese records, we may mention Professor Kato of the Imperial University. He attempts to show that Ame-no-mi-naka-nushi-no-kami in the light of modern science of religion reveals traces of primitive monotheism (11).

The Ainus of Japan may be regarded as the very last remnant of a great prehistoric race, which was, without doubt, once spread over an area extending from Siberia in the North, down to the southermost limits of Japan. They have been carefully studied by J. Batchelor, who spent many years among them. In Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. I, he describes them as originally monotheistic. Although their religion, as now developed, is found to be extremely polytheistic, yet the very word for 'God' being in the singular number, seems to indicate that in the beginning it was monotheistic in nature. The name *Kamui* means 'he who covers' or 'overshadows.' And thus we are at once reminded of the ΟΥΡΑΝΟΣ of the Greeks and the *Heaven* of the Chinese (12). ~~ὀύρανος~~ = οὐρανός

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THE MONGOLIAN RACE

(1) Book of History, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. III, pp. 39, 41, 44.
(2) J. Ross, The Original Religion of China, p. 24.
(3) J. Ross, Op. Cit., pp. 37, 38.
(4) J. Legge, The Religions of China, p. 29.
(5) J. Legge, Op. Cit., p. 16.
(6) H. G. Underwood, The Religions of Eastern Asia, p. 106.
(7) H. B. Hulbert, The Passing of Korea, p. 404.
(8) U. Holmberg, Mythology of all Races, Vol. IV, p. 390.
(9) U. Holmberg, Op. Cit., pp. 391, 392.
(10) Kokehi, "Transactions of the Asiatic Society for Japan," May 1922, Vol. XLIX, Part I, pp. 100, 101.
(11) Op. Cit., Vol. XXXVI, Part I, pp. 141-162.
(12) J. Batchelor, The Ainus, Hasting's Enc. Rel. and Ethics, Vol. I, p. 239.

CHAPTER XV

INDIA

INDIA is of all countries the most religious. Its history, as far back as it can be traced, is a history of religion.

The sacred books of the Hindus, especially the Rig-Veda, portray in vivid colors the religious faith and life of the early inhabitants of India.

Red-Veda

The date of the Rig-Veda is usually put at 1500-1000 B. C. Its theology appears to be fully developed already at that time. The idea of god was old and familiar, well understood and generally accepted (1).

Many gods are introduced to us. Most of them represent powers or objects of nature. On closer scrutiny several of these latter seem to have come into the pantheon subsequent to the Aryan invasion of the country. As a representative of this class the great Indra may be mentioned. While occupying a high place in the religion of the Rig-Veda, the phenomena which describe him and the attributes ascribed to him are obviously taken from the nature that surrounded the dwellers in Hindustan. The inference may therefore be drawn, that he arose after the Aryans immigrated thither.

These same hymns reveal gods of older origin. There are reasons to believe that they were the great gods before the people left their ancient home in the highlands to the north of India. The early religion of the Iranian branch shows several similarities in names and characteristics of the gods that appear common to the two cultures, and we are led to assume that they were identical in the days before the great exodus to the South and West.

When we survey the Vedic pantheon, there is one imposing figure that at once attracts our attention. Above all the other gods towers in moral grandeur the form of Varuna. (This is the ΟΥΡΑΝΟΣ of the Greeks.) "Here is one among the throng of deities of whom we can claim that his worship dates from the very earliest Vedic period," says the Indian scholar MacNicol. He continues: "The evidence seems too strong to be rejected that identifies this god of the wide firmament and the open sky, of the day and night . . ., with Ahura-Mazda, the supreme god of Zoroastrianism. So completely does Varuna dominate the scene when the Vedic worshipper turns his face toward him, that it has been maintained that we have in him traces still surviving of a very ancient and pre-Vedic monotheism" (2).

Going farther up the stream of time we discover behind Varuna another god, almost superseded, all but vanished. He is but dimly visible here and there in the Vedas. To the early poets he had already become a fading star. Who was this most ancient of all gods? This vanishing deity?——Our Aryan ancestors called him
(5) *Dyaus Pitar*, the Sky-Father or *Heaven-Father*.

Put side by side with this name, the Zeus Pater of the Greeks, the Latin Jupiter, and the Tiu or Ziu in other languages of this class, and what is the natural conclusion? That the deity, who bore this name, was worshipped by the whole Aryan family in the days before the great migration; that he was prominent enough to be remembered in their far distant homes, after long wanderings and ages; that some of them remembered him so well and revered him so much as to make him their supreme god throughout their national existence, witness the Greek and Roman civilizations.

Were there any other gods worshipped in the very earliest period of the Aryans? None that we can clearly see, or, indeed, that we can see at all.

We are mindful of the fact that some of the prominent students of primitive religions will maintain that the earliest conception of the deity among the Aryans was a belief in a dual divinity, heaven and earth, Dyaus-Pitar and Pritivi.

It is not difficult to prove that the worship of Mother Earth (Pritivi) is a later invention. It is well known that the Indo-European branch severed itself from the old stock earlier than the Indo-Aryan, and hence, when we find no trace of Earth-and-Heaven union in the earliest culture, we conclude that it is a later development.

As far as we can judge, then, the religion of the primitive Aryans in the very dawn of their existence, was a belief in *one* God. (5)*

It may be just as well at this point to summon the testimony of some of the best known specialists in Indian religious lore.

In his work *Les Origines Indo-Européennes*, Pictet maintains that the Aryans had a primitive monotheism, although it was vague and rudimentary; he regards both Iranian dualism and Hindu polytheism as being developments of the earlier religion.

Speaking of the earliest religion of the Aryans, Max Müller says: "There is a monotheism that precedes the polytheism of the Veda; and even in the invocations of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of idolatrous phrase- müller!

ology, like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds" (3).

Professor Hopkins admits "that the poets of the Rig-Veda were unquestionably esoterically unitarians to a much greater extent and in an earlier period than has generally been acknowledged. The admission that other gods exist does not nullify the attitude of tentative monotheism" (4).

When the Aryans invaded India they found a number of aboriginal tribes, whose cult consisted in fear of evil spirits. There is, however, no reason for assuming that this was the original worship of these tribes. We have well-attested facts to show that a decided degeneration had set in before the Aryans appeared on the scene.

The Santals, the most numerous and important of these aboriginal tribes, have a tradition universally accepted by them as true, that in the beginning they were not worshippers of demons as now. Thakur, the one true God, created everything by his word. He created the first pair of human beings. They were happy and served him. But the evil spirit, Marang Buru, came to them and told them that he was their grandfather, and that he would make them still more happy by showing them how to make 'handi'—native liquor. They listened to him, and that was the beginning of their degradation (5).

Speaking from his own experience among the Kols*, Jellinghaus says: "I have come to see more and more that all heathen know that God is. This God, Singbonga, is alone the true God, whose existence the heart of the Kol is still capable of feeling" (6).

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*One of the aboriginal tribes of India.

Another hill tribe, the Todas, used to believe in a Supreme Being who was the Creator and the instructor of the people (7).

There is absolutely no evidence to show that the evolution of religion in India, either among the Aryans or the aborigines, has been from the more crude to the loftier (5) and sublime. The sacred books as well as the earliest traditions prove conclusively that the development has been the reverse.

The many names do not mean as many gods. We shall have occasion to point out this fact when we study the religions of other races, but the statement is pertinent also when applied to India.

Discussing this phase of the ancient Aryan faith, Dr. Ellinwood says: "Wherever may have been that historic cradle in which the infancy of our race was passed, it seems certain from the similarities of language, that the Aryan family once dwelt together, and had a common worship, and called the supreme deity by a common name. It is maintained by many authors, in India as well as in Europe, that the different designations or names of various powers of nature were only applied as names of one and the same potential deity" (8).

According to the *Rig-Veda,* Book I, 164, the gods are all regarded as simply various manifestations of one Divine Being. "They call him Indra, Mithra, Varuna, Agni—that which is One, the wise name by different terms."

Such is the form of religion which meets us in the early Vedic period. In name, many gods appear, generally as impersonations of powers and objects of nature; but these are still regarded, not so much as distinct deities, but rather as various manifestations of a god who is essentially one.

> A German Indianist, P. Hänsler, gives a rather convincing explanation of this religious phenomenon in India. He writes in the Anthropos, 1911, as follows: "Er ist und bleibt gewiss eine unanfechtbare Tatsache, dass die indischen Gottheiten zu der Lichtnature, zum Himmelsraum, zur Sonne, zur Morgenröte, zu Blitz, Feuer, Wasser, Wind, in einige innige Beziehung treten; aber stellte sich der Inder der Urzeit diese Wesen selbst als Gottheit vor, oder aber nur als Spiegelbild, als etwas, das uns die abstrakte Idee fürht und veranschaulicht? Existierten die vielen Götter wirklich im Geiste des Brahamen als von einander getrennte Wesen, oder sind die Namen nur eben soviele Bilder und Bezeichnungen für das *Eine,* das sich so vielgestaltig den Herzen offenbart und das der Mensch in der Tiefe seiner Seele fühlt und ahnt?
>
> Wer möchte wohl bezweifeln, dass zwischen Surja, Savitar, und Sonne eine innige Verbindung besteht? Dasselbe aber, was von Surja und Savitar prädiziert wird, findet in den Hymnen seine Anwendung auch auf Mitra, Vischnu, und andere Götter, so dass schon eine ganze Reihe von Gottheiten, und zwar aus der Reihe der höchsten Lichtgötter, bei näherem Zusehen unverkennbar zu einer *Einheit* zusammenschrumpfen.
>
> Warheit ist dass je weiter hinauf in die graue Vorzeit hinein wir die Quellen der Religion verfolgen, ein umso reinerer Glaube uns entgegentritt; ihn bis auf den Ursprung selbst wissenschaftlich zu durchforschen, ist nicht möglich, weil sich die literarischen Quellen im Sande des Urzeit verlieren.
>
> Was darüber geschrieben und gesprochen wird, ist Mutmassung da aber der Fluss, so weit wir seinen Lauf verfolgen können, in seiner frühesten Jugend das klarste Wasser zeigt und sich in seinem Vorwärtsströmen durch die Jahrhunderte beständig trübt, so haben wir ein gutes Recht in Überstimmung mit den Traditionen des Menschengeschlechtes, entgegen den absoluten Entwicklungs theoremen, in Ursprunge selbst ungetrübte Klarheit, d. i. Wahrheit zu erwarten" (9).

We conclude the deposition of testimony from India, by the following quotation of Max Müller, cited by Dr. Ellinwood: "Is it not something worth knowing even to us after a lapse of four or five thousand years, that before the separation of the Aryan race, before the existence of Sanskrit, Greek, or Latin, before the gods of the Veda had been worshipped, and before there was a sanctuary of Zeus among the sacred oaks of Dodona, one Supreme Deity had been found, had been named, had been invoked by the ancestors of our race, and had been invoked by a name which has never been excelled by any other name?" (10).

conclusion

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INDIA

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(2) N. MacNicol, The Religious Quest of India, pp. 10, 11.
(3) Max Müller, Op. Cit., p. 559.
(4) E. W. Hopkins, Religions of India, p. 140.
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(7) W. H. R. Rivers, The Todas, Chapter XIX.
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(10) Max Müller, Cited by F. F. Ellinwood, Op. Cit., p. 236.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CLASSICAL EAST AND ANCIENT EUROPE

THE CLASSICAL EAST

AT a very early date a people called the Sumerians were occupying the region about the Persian Gulf. We do not know who they were racially; archeological conjectures have of late connected them with the Chinese. It is known for certain that they came as far east as the Indian peninsula. Recent excavations in the Punjab have brought to light unmistakable evidence of Sumerian culture in that part of the country.

The Sumerian cities had each their chief god. They appear to have been the personifications of the sun and the moon, the power manifesting itself in vegetation, in the waters and the storms (1).

In that primitive Sumerian period it is difficult to say "whether the deities were originally different, or whether they were different epithets. There was a tendency to multiply gods by applying to known deities new names. In time the new name and the old were thought to designate different beings. At all events the documents of this period present a bewildering perplexity of divine names. While we cannot explain all of these, it is clear that the number of them was increasing" (2). (1) ✓

The same tendency to increase the number of their gods is apparent among the Akkadian forerunners of the Babylonians. (2)

In discussing this phase of religious development, Dr. Ratzel maintains that "the tendency to multiply parallel conceptions makes the number of the gods increase" (3).

As a case in point it may be mentioned that Ea is called fifty names, and all those were names of separate divinities in later Babylonian times.

While it is true that extant sources, so far as yet known, have not hitherto revealed, in the distant antiquity of the Akkadian supremacy in the Euphrates Valley, any distinct recognition of God as One, living and personal, it is equally true that there has been no attempt by the more recent generations to develop a monotheistic system. "It is of first importance to observe," says Kellogg, "that throughout the whole four thousand years or more of Babylonian history, there is no indication whatever of any tendency to the evolution of a monotheistic faith" (4).

(5)

Writing in Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Foucart claims that the conception of a "Sky-God" is found in old Chaldea, in Semitic and proto-Semitic mythologies (5). If this be conceded, may we not assume by the law of analogy, that an original monotheism in this very cradle of the race has degenerated in a manner identical to that of the Chinese and the Aryans until we meet it in the early records as crass polytheism?

There are some who go so far as to assert that all the branches of the Semitic race were monothetisic. We refer especially to Max Müller and Ernest Renan. According to the latter, evidences that the monotheism of the Semitic races was of a very early origin, appear in the fact that all their names for the deity—El, Elohim, Ilu, Baal, Bel, Adonai, Shaddai, and Allah—denote one being and that supreme. These names have resisted all changes, and doubtless extend as far back as the Semitic language or the Semitic race (6).

We call attention to the well known contention of Renan that the tendency to monotheism belongs to the Semitic race by instinct, and that he seemed to imply that without it the human race would never have arrived at the knowledge or worship of the One God.

A western branch of the Akkadians occupied the lands toward the Mediterranean. We refer to the Canaanites of Biblical renown. Both sacred and secular records agree that they were polytheists. One may ask if their religion was an evolution upwards from some lower and still more degraded form of worship. Sacred history shows the very opposite to have been the case. As early as 2000 B. C., Abraham, in his wanderings, found that his God was known and honored in Salem and in Gerar; and at a somewhat later date, Jethro in Midian, and Balaam in Mesopotamia, were witnesses that the knowledge of God was not yet extinct in those countries (7).

ANCIENT EUROPE

The strongest argument against primitive monotheism is the alleged absence of it in the ancient cultures of Europe. It is held that a people as highly endowed as the White race could not possibly have forgotten its original faith, if that faith was the belief in one god.

(4)

The argument seems perfectly valid until we find that the cultural achievement of a race has nothing to do with its faith. Religious beliefs and culture do not develop along parallel lines, but very often the reverse. Religion and morality are one thing, and a very different thing are wealth, industry, art, science, and what we have come to call "civilization." On this point Max

Müller has remarked decisively: "No one would venture to maintain that religion always keeps pace with general civilization" (8).

However, even Europe has its testimony in favor of an original monotheism.

(a) a) The Etruscans, whose massive cities, built before Rome was founded, still survive, held that there was "*a single source of all existence,*" animate and inanimate. Its immediate agents were the mysterious "veiled gods," whose number was unknown and whose names were never uttered. They were the channels of the Divine Will, through which it passed to the twelve highest known gods. Historians may differ as to how much may be predicated of "the Single Source of all existence," but the term, "Divine Will," must necessarily imply personality. The Divine Will personalized we call God.

(b) b) The Greeks. One may hesitate to speak of monotheism among the ancient Greeks, as there are, admittedly, but few traces of it to be found. The apparent reason for this, however, is the fact that their earliest literature dates from so late a period. It began with Homer not earlier than 600 B. C., and direct accounts of the religion of the Greeks are not traced beyond 560 B. C. Welcher, a scholar, whose examinations have been exhaustive, has, in the opinion of Max Müller, fairly established the primitive monotheism of the Greeks. Müller says: "When we ascend with him to the most distant heights of Greek history the idea of God as the Supreme Being stands before us as a simple fact" (9).

In this connection we call attention to the *Orphic Hymns* in which we find celebrated the Pantheos, the Universal God, long before the advent of the popular divinities.

Dr. Carpenter is convinced that "the great sky-god Zeus, whose personality could be almost completely detached from the visible firmament, brought the whole world under his sway, and as early as the fifth century before Christ, Greek poetry abounded in lofty monotheistic language which the early Christian apologists freely quoted in their defense" (10).

Even with Homer and Hesiod, despite their corrupt mythology, Zeus is often the all-seeing, all-knowing, all-wise, the just One, the Father of men and gods.

Xenophanes says: "There is but one god, greatest among men and gods, and not like mortals in form or mind" (11).

We believe the best minds of Greece find their expression in the famous appeal of Maximus of Tyre, cited by Murray in *Four Stages of Greek Religion.* To quote: "God himself, the Father and fashioner of all that is, older than the sun or sky, greater than time and eternity and all the flow of being, is unnameable by any lawgiver, unutterable by any voice, not to be seen by any eye. But we, being unable to apprehend his essence, use the help of sounds and names and pictures, of beaten gold and ivory and silver, of plants and rivers, mountain-peaks and torrents, yearning for the knowledge of Him, and in our weakness naming all that is beautiful in this world after his nature—just as happens to earthly lovers. To them the most beautiful sight will be the actual lineaments of the beloved, but for memory's sake they will be happy in the sight of a lyre, a little spear, a chair perhaps, or a running-ground, or anything in the world that wakens the memory of the beloved" (12).

c) The Slavs. The Greek historian Procopus writes as follows concerning the Slavs: "They believe that there

(e)

is one single God who is the Creator of the lightning and the sole lord of all things, and to him they sacrifice cattle and all sorts of animals" (6).

A similar account concerning the Elbe Slavs is given by the Chronicler Helmod: "Among the multiform divine forms to whom they ascribe fields, forests, sorrows and joys, they do not deny that one God rules over the others in heaven and that he, preeminent in might, cares only for things celestial. . . The name of the chief God of the Slavs has not come down to us. There is, however, a well-founded belief that it was Svarog" (14).

d) The Teutonic peoples had many gods when they first appear in history. Nevertheless, it was Odin (Wodin) that held the place of High God. He alone was the *All-Father.*

e) The Supreme deity among the Finno-Ugric stocks is the Heaven-God. Holmberg describes this god in the following terms: "The most usual qualities attributed to him are 'great, high, good.' As there are no actual conceptions of this being, there are no attempts to materialize him. Characteristic for all these peoples is the following description of the Samoyeds: "They never make images of Num, therefore they do not know how to sculpture him" (15).

Bishop Le Roy cites Quatrefages as authority for the statement that the primitive populations of northern Europe and Asia have a definite conception of a High God. "But in this whole area," says Quatrefages, "among all the nations concerning whom our information is exact, by the side of secondary divinities, or rather spirits more or less deified, is found a supreme God, creator and preserver of the universe. It is the *Jumbel* of the Laplanders, the *Num* of the Samoyeds, the *Jumman* of the Votiaks, the *Yuma* of the Tcheremis, the *Artoyon, Schugotoygon,* or *Tangara* of the Jakouts. All these great divinities are evidently the *single and eternal* God" (16).

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THE CLASSICAL EAST

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(2) G. A. Barton, The Religions of the World, p. 21.
(3) Fr. Ratzel, The History of Mankind, Vol. I, p. 235.
(4) S. H. Kellogg, The Genesis and Growth of Religion, p. 235.
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(6) F. F. Ellinwood, Oriental Religions and Christianity, pp. 254, 255.
(7) Genesis 14:18-20; 20:3-9; Numbers 24:5-17.

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(10) E. Carpenter, Pagan and Christian Creeds, p. 130.
(11) Xenophanes, Cited by Clemens.
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CHAPTER XVII

EGYPT

AMONG the ancient civilizations, that of Egypt is doubtless one of the oldest. The records of its religion and culture seem to date back to the very dawn of human history. While the early experience of certain other races may be shrouded in misty uncertainty and mere traditions, and the student is forced to make his deductions as best he may, the case of Egypt is very different. Here we find the religious faith of the people revealed to us by an immense mass of documentary evidence in the form of papyri manuscripts as well as the well nigh innumerable monumental inscriptions. This fact, naturally, would tend to make the study of the ancient religion of Egypt a comparatively easy matter, as the student may at any stage of the development, verify it by a careful reference to the documents at hand.

A god of many names. At first glance these documents seem to reveal a bewildering number of deities. One can readily understand how the Greeks could say of the Egyptians that they had ten thousand gods. But many documents of undisputable authority are proofs of the fact that the same god is often known under many different names. In the Litanies of the god *Ra,* which are inscribed on the walls of the royal tombs at Biban-el-Moluk, the god is invoked under seventy-five different names. *The Book of the Dead* has a chapter consisting entirely of the names of Osiris. The inscriptions of the temple of Dendera give a long list of names of the goddess Hathor. She is identified, not only with Isis, but with Sechet at Memphis, Neith at Sais, and with many others.

These authorities alone are sufficient to convince us that not only are some of the inferior deities mere aspects of the greater gods, but that several of these latter are but different aspects of one and the same deity.

The entire list of gods of the high order is easily reduced to two groups, the sun-god *Ra* and Osiris. "The whole mythology of Egypt," says Renouf, "may be said to turn upon the histories of *Ra* and Osiris; and these histories run into each other, sometimes in inextricable confusion, which ceases to be wonderful when texts are discovered which simply identify Osiris and *Ra*" (1).

Discussing the ancient religions of Egypt, A. Wiedemann, in Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, admits that "from the Egyptian texts scholars have collected such passages as would imply a higher conception of the deity, or such as attribute to the deity the qualities appropriate to a god regarded as one. They have also found passages which speak of a god as the creator of all life and all existing things, as one who traverses eternity, the lord of infinite time, one who cannot be grasped by the hand, whose evolutions are a miracle, the outstretch of whose being knows no limits, and who is king in Thebes, and, simultaneously, prince in Heliopolis, and the 'Great of Crowns' in Memphis. He cannot be seen; he listens to prayers; he turns his countenance to men according to their conduct; he is hidden, and his form is not known; he is alone, and there is none beside him" (2).

We continue to quote from Mr. Wiedemann: "Nor is this relation essentially altered when it comes under the operation of syncretistic modes of thought, for in that case the other deities are defined as "the various existences or phases (ren-u, names) assumed in other localities by the One God, whose 'names' are many. The tendency to such syncretism was specially active in the later period" (3).

The Turin papyrus introduces us to the almighty God, the self-existent, who made heaven and earth, the waters, the breath of life, the gods and men. This self-existent one speaks as follows: "I am the maker of the heaven and the earth. . . . When I open my eyes there is light, when I close them there is darkness. I am Chepera in the morning, Ra at noon, Tum in the evening."

In a book, *La Religion de l'ancienne Egypte,* published in 1912, M. Virey, an attaché of the French Archeological Mission in Cairo, calls attention to this strange feature of the old religion "that for some inexplicable reason, monotheism established itself very early in Egypt." Then he adds: "The One God, the God unique, is mentioned on the most ancient monuments that we have, namely those of the third and fourth dynasties, 4450-3950 B. C." (4). Note

A leading French Egyptologist, M. Maspero, quotes from the pyramid of Pepi I: "Le dieu unique est Tum. Il existait quand il n'y avait pas encore de ciel, qu'il n'y avait pas encore de terre, qu'il n'y avait pas encore d'hommes, que les dieux n'étaient pas encore nés, qu'il n'y avait pas encore de mort"* (5).

**Translation*: "Tum is the One God. He existed when there was as yet no heaven; when there was as yet no earth; when there were as yet no men; when the gods were not yet born; when there was as yet no death."

There are texts in which Ra, Osiris, Amon, and all other gods disappear, except as simple *names,* and the unity of God is asserted in the noblest language of monotheistic religion.

In view of this fact we find many eminent scholars who, with full knowledge of all that can be said to the contrary, (3) maintain that the Egyptian religion was essentially monotheistic, and that the multiplicity of gods was only due to the personification of the attributes, character and offices of the supreme God.

Emmanuel de Rougé is not a new authority on matters relating to Egypt; but his findings of fifty years ago are still unassailable. He declares: "No one has called in question the fundamental meaning of the principal passages by the help of which we are able to establish (4 what ancient Egypt has taught concerning God, the world and man. I said *God,* not the *gods.* The first characteristic of the religion is the Unity of God, most energetically expressed: God, One, Sole and Only; no other with Him.—He is the only Being—living in truth—'Thou art One, and millions of beings proceed from Thee.'—He has made everything, and He alone has not been made."

This is the way de Rougé explains the polytheism of Egypt: "The Egypt which Menes brought together entire under his scepter was divided into Nomes, each having a capital town; each of these regions had its principal god designated by a special name; 'he of that nome, etc.,' but it was always the same doctrine which reappears under different names. 'One idea predominates, that of a single and primeval God; everywhere and always it is One Substance, a self-existent, an unapproachable God'" (6).

In the Leyden Museum is kept the record of an extremely ancient hymn in which God is called "The One of One."

The question may well be asked: are these noble doctrines the result of centuries of development? De Rougé answers in the negative. He says: "These were in existence more than two thousand years before the Christian era. On the other hand, polytheism developed itself and progressed without interruption until the time of the Ptolemais. It is, therefore, more than five thousand years since, in the Valley of the Nile, the hymn began to the Unity of God and the immortality of the soul." . . .

"The belief in the Unity of the Supreme God and in his attributes as Creator and Lawgiver of man, whom he has endowed with an immortal soul—these are the primitive notions, enchased, like indestructible diamonds, in the midst of the mythological superfetations accumulated in the centuries which passed over that ancient civilization" (7). (5)

The combined testimony of the ancient documents—papyri and monuments—prove that from or rather before, the beginning of the historical period, the pure monotheistic religion passed through the phase of Sabaeism: the sun, instead of being considered as a symbol of life, was taken as the manifestation of God himself.

Renouf concludes that the position of de Rougé is in the main impregnable. "It is incontestably true that the sublimer portions of the Egyptian religion are not the comparatively late results of a process of development or elimination from the grosser. The sublimer portions are demonstrably ancient, and the last stage of the Egyptian religion, that known to the Greek and Latin writers, heathen or Christian, was by far the grossest and most corrupt" (8).

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EGYPT

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CHAPTER XVIII

AFRICA

THE Dark Continent with its 140 millions is about to take the stand. What will the testimony be? No evidence may be adduced from her ancient records; for of such she possesses none.

Nevertheless, there is no lack of evidence confirming the assumption that "God left not himself without witness" even in Africa.

The present investigation is based on official reports of explorers, government agents, missionaries, and—most of all—on the oral testimony of the natives.

As a general statement we may say that the belief in One Supreme Being is universal in Africa. Very often the idea of God is of a vague and abstract character; he is too far away to be influenced by human agencies. But they all recognize his existence. This impression is so deeply engraved upon their moral and mental nature that any system of Atheism strikes them as too absurd and preposterous to require a denial. All the tribes have a name for God; and many have several names to designate his character and attributes.

Diedrich Westermann, a missionary expert, has but recently made the assertion that "the belief in a Supreme Being is found all over Africa. Chiefly in West Africa, but also in the East and South, the expression used for God means really the Sky. . . . He is regarded as the ultimate cause of everything, the originator and representative of the world order" (1).

Livingston gives same
testimony!

We sense that a statement of this kind, made by a missionary, may be challenged on the ground of professional bias. Let us, therefore, in this connection, introduce the testimony of an expert, who is very far removed from the missionary ranks. We refer to Mr. Reville. Speaking of the religions of Africa, he says: "Of all non-civilized peoples, the blacks of Africa most easily familiarize themselves with the idea of God ruling the (2) entire universe." . . . "We never greatly surprise the negro when we speak to him of one, sole, truly existing God." He even goes so far as to find "some traces of a worship positively rendered to a supreme God" (2).

God is called Waka among the Gallas and their neighbors to the east of the Sudan. The term Waka may also signify sky, but in the religious language it always designates the Supreme Being, real and personal.

The greater part of Africa, south of the equator, is occupied by the numerous Bantu tribes. They use many names in referring to God; three of these are Mulungu, Leza, and Nzambe. He is not a "Spirit," that is, he is conceived as anterior to death, as having never died himself, and he it is precisely who commands life. He has nothing to do with the spirits or demons. These latter, among the Bantus, are not considered intermediaries between man and the deity. They do not conceive God as the chief or king of the gods. He is outside all of that.

Andrew Lang makes some very just remarks on this point: "In reality, the Bantus do not conceive God as we would be inclined to suppose. Let us question them.

"What is Mulungu?

"First of all. Mulungu is not *mtu kama watu*, 'a man like men,' i. e., a being like another being. No. But this does not prevent him from often borrowing a number of anthropomorphic attributes. Yet he is not a man.

"Nor is Mulungu a *Mtima,* a human soul living in the world and animating it. The world has something like a soul, but it is not Mulungu.

"Nor is Mulungu a *Mzimu,* not even an ancient one and the first of the Mzimu. A Mzimu is a disembodied soul that has passed through death. Mulungu was never man, he never dies.

"Might Mulungu be Pepo? No. A *pepo* is a *pepo,* and every *pepo* (spirit) has its name. To say of Mulungu that he is a *pepo* is to insult him, is 'to talk like a simpleton.'

"Nor is Mulungu *Uwingu* (the sky), nor Dyua (the sun), nor Anga (the light), nor Mwezi (the moon). He is no doubt in them all, but he is something other than that.

"What is he then?

"We do not know. He is, he lives, he sees, he does whatever he wishes, he is unseizable, is beyond our reach, he is Mulungu" (3).

Leza is a very general Bantu name for God. According to Dugall Campbell, the word seems to be derived from a root meaning *to be* which would suggest the Jahve idea of God, the great *I am* of the Jews. He is also called the Great Great One, the Eternal God (4).

(5)

The deposition made by Smith and Dale in behalf of Leza is of major importance in this discussion. In speaking of the many names of Leza they affirm: "We are certain that in the consciousness of the Ba-ila* at present, these names do not imply that Leza is the totality of ancient heroes; nor do they imply a recognition of many gods. To conclude that the Ba-ila were polytheists on the strength of these titles would be as accurate as saying it of the Parsis who are said to have a thousand and one names for the Supreme Being" (5).

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*An African tribe.

Our next witness comes from the Congo Valley. John H. Weeks spent many years among the cannibals in that part of Africa, and lived to tell of his experiences. In discussing their religion he proves conclusively that their idea of God was fixed and clear long before the Whites (4) came to Congo, and that it was in no way whatever colored or influenced by foreign conceptions. To quote: "On the inner Congo he is called Nzambi, or by his fuller title Nzambi a mpungu; no satisfactory root-word has been found for Nzambi, but for mpungu there are sayings and proverbs that clearly indicate its meaning as, most of all, supreme, highest, and Nzambi a mpungu as the Being most High, or Supreme.

It is interesting to note that the most common name for the Supreme Being on the Congo is also known, in one form or another, over an extensive area of Africa reaching from six degrees north of the equator away to extreme South Africa, as for example, among the Ashanti it is Onyame, at Gaboon it is Anyambie, and two thousand miles away, among the Barotse folk it is Niambe. These are the names that stand for a Being who is endowed with strength, wealth and wisdom by the natives; and he is also regarded and spoken of by them as the principal Creator of the world, and the maker of all things" (6).

In travelers' tales and missionary reports we occasionally come across the names of Negritos and Pygmies. It is evident that these constitute the lowest strata of the African population. That they have a religion, we need not at this time discuss. But what we would like to know is this: what is the relation between their religious conception and their cultural development?

Of the Negritos, it is declared, by one who has made a special study of them, that they are not only the most (5) primitive and ancient of all Africans, but also that their belief in the "Father of All" was of the greatest transparency and purity. Then he adds: "Des considérations que nous venons de faire, il résulte donc que l'immense majorité des tribus qui ont conservé dans la plus grande clareté et pureté la croyance en un 'pére de tous,' appartiennent au cercle culturel le plus ancien; celui des Nigritiens"* (7).

The Akka Pygmies inhabit the central forests of Africa, and are considered as the lowest race of man. Nevertheless, they possess a pure monotheism, involving a lofty conception of God, which does not seem to have (6) arisen out of animistic beliefs and practices. Bishop Le Roy, who spent his life in that part of the world, has found that they have a clearer and less tainted idea of a Supreme Being than many of the races of the continent who are generally regarded as more civilized (8).

On the basis of these evidences the conclusion seems to be that all of Africa believes in a Supreme Being. There is, however, no evidence, that this belief is a result of development, or from contact with other races. On the other hand, it is only too apparent that their conception of God is constantly getting to be more dim and vague.

**Translation*: "Based on the investigations which we have made, it is evident that the large majority of the tribes that have retained the belief in a 'Father of All' in its greatest purity, belong to the oldest stage of civilization, namely, that of the Negritos."

The high gods of the low races often seem to fade away and become inactive, or, at least, are out of relations to man. In proof of this tendency, Dr. Carpenter refers to Olurun, lord of the sky, among the Egbas (West Coast). This god also bore the title of Eleda, the Creator. But he was too remote and exalted to be the object of human worship, and no prayer was offered to him (9).

Smith and Dale interrogated two venerable old men of the Ba-Ila about Leza's government of the world. This is the way one of them had reasoned it out: "Leza is getting old. Today Leza is not as he is wanted to be. Long ago he was the One who could be urged to do well, but today he has left off doing so" (10).

Africa has spoken.

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CHAPTER XIX

AUSTRALIA AND THE ISLANDS OF THE SEA

AUSTRALIA

THE aborigines of Australia used to be regarded as the lowest in culture and the nearest to the primitive type. For that reason they were considered the most profitable field of research for those who were seeking to discover the most elementary forms of culture, ritual and belief.

Huxley was among those who denied the existence of religion among the Australian Blacks. "No cult can be said to exist among them" (1).

Had he come to Australia and lived with the savages a few years, he would have altered his views on that question. The fact is that the religious conceptions of these primitives are relatively so lofty that many have sought to explain them as a result of contact with European missionaries. But this could not be substantiated. It is rather interesting to note what Dr. Leuba is forced to admit in this connection: "Recent anthropological researches furnish sufficient evidence to warrant the view (1) that even the lowest savages entertain a belief in a Supreme Being. It seems now established that in every part of Australia, except perhaps among the Arunti, a tribe of the central regions, there is a belief in an All-Father, who is perhaps regarded as Creator. He is variously named in the different tribes: Baiame, Daramulun, Mungamongana, Nurelli, etc., that is, our father,

father of the whole people, father of all the tribes, great master, and the like" (2).

Certain explorers admit the relative generality of the "All-Father" conception, but they are not willing to accord to it any supernatural origin. They contend that the origin of the idea is derived from their chiefs or "head-men," whom they term "father" and that it all harks back to some outstanding powerful chief among their ancestors. In his book, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* Emile Durkheim devotes an intensive study to the Australian natives. After a detailed discussion on the geographical distribution of the belief in a Supreme Being, he continues: "The essential characteristics of this personage (Altjira) are the same everywhere. It is he who regulates the journeys of the sun and moon, he gives them orders . . . . The people speak of him as a sort of a Creator; he is called the father of men, and they say that he made them. He is the benefactor of humanity. Even yet he plays the role of a sort of providence for them. It is he who supplies his worshippers with all that is necessary for their existence. But being at the same time guardian of the morals of the tribe, he treats them severely when these are violated. If we are to believe certain observers, he will even fulfil the office of judge after this life; he will separate the good from the bad" (3).

The chief god of the Murray River Australians was Nourelli. He was immortal, self-created, and the Creator" (4).

Summing up the testimony for Australia, we arrive at this conclusion that it seems clear that all the various names of God, Nurrundere, Nourelli, Bunjil, Daramulun, Altjira, and Baiame, all represent the same Being under different names.

The next logical conclusion is that there has been an original monotheistic faith common to all the tribes, and that the later development has been analogous to that observed among other races.

THE ISLANDS OF THE SEA

Neither space nor time will permit a detailed discussion of the religious beliefs of all the insular races. Nor is it indeed necessary. There is a strange and startling similarity in all the cults, so that, in selecting three or four groups for a brief study, these same groups may be considered typical of all the rest.

In studying the religions of Africa, we noted the absence of historical data. The same difficulty confronts us in the Island world. Obviously, then, our sources of information will be confined to the natives themselves, and the reports of white persons who have lived among them.

a) *The Indian Archipelago*

The present religion is one of mortal fear of evil spirits. The natives bend all their religious energies to ward off the baneful influence exercised by these malignant powers. Their hopes and fears, their beliefs and practices, have been studied and admirably set forth by Johannes Warneck in his book, *The Living Forces of the Gospel.* He produces ample evidence to show that the β) Battaks have a clear conception of a High God. He is called Debata. "Back of, and above all the motley multitude of demons and spirits, is Debata, the one God" (5).

They do not, however, render any divine honor to Debata. The apparent reason for this lack of worship is the belief that the evil spirits have succeeded in forcing themselves in between the people and their God. A dying monotheism, aye,—but a monotheism, nevertheless.

"The natives of South Borneo assign to their supreme divinity, Atala, a home in the highest heaven on the shore of the celestial lake" (6).

b) *The Andaman Islands*

The inhabitants of the Andaman Islands are, it is pretty generally admitted, as good an example of a primitive people as can be found. They are dwarfish and go about practically nude, and were, for a time, believed to be a people destitute of any idea of God. The careful investigations, however, of Mr. E. H. Man, who lived for eleven years among them, have dispelled that notion, and we now know that they worship a Supreme Being whom they name Puluga. (4)

Mr. Lowie, has his doubts about the monotheistic character of this being. He bases his view very largely on the adverse findings of Mr. A. R. Brown, who admittedly knew the natives only in a very superficial way. According to Brown, Puluga is hostile to mankind, or, at best, reluctantly benevolent (7).

The character of Puluga, as described by Mr. Man, is essentially different: "1) Though his appearance is like fire, yet he is—now-a-days—invisible. 2) He was never born and is immortal. 3) By him the world and all objects, animate and inanimate, were created, excepting only the powers of evil. 4) He is regarded as omniscient, knowing even the thoughts of their hearts. 5) He is angered by the commission of certain sins, while to those in pain or distress he is full of pity, and sometimes deigns to afford relief. 6) He is the judge from whom each soul receives its sentence after death, and, to some extent, the hope of escape from the tortures of *jereg-lar-*

mugu is said to affect their course of action in the present life" (8).

Mr. Man adds that this belief is not due to missionary influence, nor are there any traditions of aliens ever having come to their islands to live. If any one, by chance of shipwreck, fell into their hands, he would invariably be killed.

c) *New Zealand and Polynesia*

(5) What do the Maoris think of God? They call him *Io*. "His life is everlasting. He is the parent of the heavens. There is no single thing that does not come under his control. He is the parent of all things. He is nothing but himself. He is the source of all thought, reflection, memories. There is nothing outside his jurisdiction; he is the God of the uppermost of all the heavens" (9).

The above conception of God is found quite generally throughout the South Sea. The names of the god are legion, but the attributes are identical. He is "the central cause of life" (10). He is the uncreated and eternal Creator wherever we meet him.

d) *Madagascar*

(6) It was the writer's great privilege to spend nine years among the coast tribes of South Madagascar. They are a blend of Malay and Polynesian races; this is also apparent in their religion.

Although they have no documentary evidence in the form of written history, there is an amazing wealth of proverbs—sayings of the ancients, as the natives designate them—and oral traditions running back into the hoary antiquity.

Andriamanitra is recognized as *the* God by all the tribes. There are numberless minor gods (zanahary), but the name Andriamanitra is never applied to any of them. They cannot conceive of more than one such as He.

Their proverbs reveal a great store of primitive theology.

It is no news to the savages to be told by the missionary that God created the world and man. "We have known it long ago," they say. "He created us, hands and feet." He is omniscient, "there is nothing unknown to God"; he hates evil; is sovereign ruler over all. "It is better to be condemned by man than to be condemned by God." He is "Ny Tompon'Aina"—the Lord of Life. May we not assume that these proverbs of the Ancients are a few fossilized remains of the early belief which was theirs in common with their Malay and Polynesian kinsmen? The Malagasy express the idea in phrases such as these: "Long, long ago, when the land was young and the sun just born, Andriamanitra was near our ancestors; they were happy. He left them and went far away. They were happy no longer." This sentiment is heard expressed in every part of the island. One of the amazing features of the proverbs is this that there is no allusion to fetish—or idol worship. It is quite certain that they did not bring idols or fetishes with them from the original home in the North East. The Hova tribe has a tradition that fetishes were not introduced prior to the reign of king Andrianompoinimerina. This may be true perhaps for that tribe, but as far as the coast tribes of the South are concerned, we know that idols and fetishes were worshipped many hundred years anterior to the time of the above mentioned ruler. The Arab influence has been very strong on the coast ever since the 8th and 9th centuries of our era, and there is every reason to believe that the worship of charms and fetishes can be traced to that source. Much of the language used in connection with their rites and worship of fetishes and other idols, is of Arabic origin.

"The isles and the inhabitants thereof" have given their testimony.

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CHAPTER XX

AMERICA

THE Red Man will be our last witness.

The facts relating to early religion in America are very much in dispute. There are those who deny categorically the least little trace of monotheism; others confidently affirm it. The leading anthropologists of today assert that no approach to monotheism had been made before the coming of the white man, and that the "Great Spirit" is a Christian importation.

There are a few data, however, that may throw a ray of light on the problem.

When these shores were first settled by Europeans, the natives were said to believe in "one chiefe God that hath beene from all eternitie" (1). This was recorded by Heriot in 1586.

Tylor admits, rather reluctantly, that the God of the Indians "can hardly be altogether a deity of foreign origin" (2).

From Virginia to Maine this god was worshipped under the names of Ahone and Michabo. Dr. Brinton informs us that Michabo originally meant "the Spirit of Light" (3).

Was this Spirit of Light a local god, confined to the eastern shores of America? The *name*, it is true, was localized, but the *god* was invoked by all the races from Tierra del Fuego to the frozen north. The Aztecs called him Tonacatecutl—God of Life,—others called him "Master of Life," "the Great Father," "the Father above," but to all he was the Great Spirit, the Good Manitou. They never identified him as ancestor of the people, nor did they imagine that the many names meant many gods.

"The Mexicans applied many names to the same divinity" (4).

The conception of God as Spirit is not equally clear in the different sections and cultures. It seems that Mexico, South America, and the forest tribes of the North had retained a nobler idea of the deity, while the Indians of the plains lost much of it. Yet, even there, one may find convincing proofs of a belief in the one High God. We quote Dr. Radin's description of the Pawnees: "In the Pawnee pantheon Tirawa reigned supreme. To him the lesser gods, both of the heavens and of the earth, as well as the people themselves acknowledged authority. Tirawa rules from his position beyond the clouds and has created and still governs the universe by means of commands executed by the lesser gods who are subject to him" (5).

In his *Outlines of Zuñi Creation Myths,* F. H. Cushing calls attention to the following religious dogma of the Zuñi Indians: "Before the beginning of the New-making, Awona-wilona (the maker and container of all, the All-Father,) solely had being. There was nothing else whatsoever throughout the great space of the ages save everywhere black darkness in it, and everywhere void desolation" (6).

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AMERICA

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CHAPTER XXI

Revelation

THE REVELATION THEORY

IN discussing the various theories we have found that, although they may differ in their method of approach, they all hold in common that man obtained the idea of God as the outcome of a purely natural process, that is to say, as *the result of Evolution.* One of these attempts, the Psychological Theory, seemed to be on the right track toward a solution of the problem, until it tried to prove that religion arose naturally from a normal use of ordinary mental powers (1).

From what we know of man's nature, this is neither possible, nor probable. It is far more reasonable and in accordance with universal experience to hold that man has a "faculty" for religion, as Max Müller would say. Yet that alone would not account for religion. A man may have eyes, but as long as he is shut up in a dark cave, he cannot see. So a man may have a faculty for apprehending God and his relation to him, but that would be as far as he could go. It is to meet this exigency that we evoke the theory of *Revelation.*

Note!

This is not a new theory. It held undisputed sway down through the centuries until the Evolutionary school made its appearance about two generations ago.

The Revelation theory assumes that man could not have a religion unless it had been revealed to him. It holds that the phenomena which are presented in the existence and history of religion would still be inexplicable, unless we predicate, not merely a natural capacity in man for the forming of religious conceptions, but also, correlated with these, a revelation of God to man, a revelation both subjective and objective, original and universal.

Subjective Revelation. It may be granted that man has a faculty for religion. He has more than that. It is impossible to ignore the fact that every man exhibits in himself the persistent operation of an impulse that turns his thoughts toward God. Mr. Jordan would ascribe it to "an ineradicable element that has been implanted in man's very constitution" (2). Then he goes on to explain it as a "universal propensity—in part intellectual, in part emotional, in part volitional—that seems to be akin to, if not indeed indistinguishable from, the soul itself" (3).

The Christian religion has recognized this element under the name of *Conscience*. We will not insist on the name; call it the operation of an impulse toward God, an innate religious urge, or the dicta of conscience,—the fact remains that it is a phenomenon whose reality and power cannot be denied.

Again, it seems to be a fact universally agreed to, that the dicta of conscience never present themselves either as originating with man himself, or as the expression of a law imposed upon him by other men. Rightly or wrongly, the voice of conscience is felt to be the expression of the will of a power above the individual, above all men, and to whom every individual stands related, by no choice of his own.

We believe it quite relevant to the discussion of this question, once more to quote Dr. Jordan: "As the Biologist must still refer the origin of Life to a power which wholly transcends his comprehension, so must the Evolutionist stand today perplexed by the existence within every man of something which Hegel called "the religious consciousness," and which Max Müller called "the faculty of faith," and which St. Paul long ago described as "the law written in man's heart." From Schleiermacher to Eduard von Hartmann, in a country, too, where strictly scientific methods are rigidly—and, sometimes at least, even ruthlessly—applied, almost every distinguished thinker has openly conceded the dominance of this mysterious instinct; and yet no one, speaking exclusively as a scientific investigator, has been able satisfactorily to explain its origin! Accordingly, while we await with unconcealed interest the answer which science may yet venture to frame, it is pertinent to recall that teaching of the Christian Scriptures which affirm that 'God left not Himself without witness' among any people" (4).

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Conscienc

(1) Subj. =
nat. Reve

(2)

Objective Revelation. While the traditional theory of Revelation took the voice of conscience for granted, it based its conclusions solely on an objective historical record.

In its original and uncritical form this theory assumed a primordial monotheism; that a clear and developed set of religious principles had been revealed to the first man, similar to the revelation given the Hebrews at Mount Sinai; and that this primeval revelation could be verified historically by original records. In addition to this, the theory postulated a high degree of culture for man in his earliest state.

It would have been strange indeed if such a conception of the Revelation theory could have passed unchallenged by modern scholars.

The Deists began an open attack on it, and David Hume carried his protest farther, not stopping until he had reached the extreme of scepticism. He, accordingly, abandoned the theory of Revelation altogether, and tried to show how purely natural causes completely account for man's religious beliefs and practices (5).

The criticism of Hume and all other subsequent attacks have led to a re-examination of the theory, a relinquishment of untenable positions, and a re-statement of its chief tenets.

We may say of this later theory of Revelation that it includes the following essentials: Early man obtained the conception of one God by means of a direct divine (a) disclosure soon after the time of his creation; clustered about this primitive monotheism, a few simple ideas were found, such as the power of God, His goodness and holiness, the obligation to obey Him, and the hope of immortality.

These fundamental conceptions could not have become the possession of man in any other way than by an act of revelation, because in their substance they deal with transcendent facts which lie wholly beyond his wit to conceive.

The theory no longer postulates a highly developed culture in the earliest stage of man's existence. It is admitted that he was ignorant of the arts and sciences, that he had few if any tools, and that he went about in the skins of animals. A simple life was his, but not savage; ignorant of many things, but not ignoble.

Thus furnished man began his earthly career. The innate religious urge we call conscience reinforced by a direct disclosure of the Divine will had equipped him for "walking with God."

(6)

Meanwhile sin emerged; the objective revelation became hazy, indistinct and finally all but lost. The dicta of conscience had little power to make themselves heard in the turmoil of existence. Man lost much, but he did not lose all the impressions of his first relation to his maker. He never lost the notion of *divine power*. Hence the tendency in early man to recognize God in those phenomena of nature which most appealed to his imagination.

The old claim that primitive Revelation, with all that it connotes, can be certified by historical documents, is open to very serious objections. In a strictly historical sense we can know nothing of man's earliest existence. The reason for this is obvious. The Revelation theory of today maintains that monotheism antedates all the extant written documents by long eras of time, that it belong to prehistory and is co-eval with man's appearance in the world.

Modern anthropology has entered the lists against the Revelation theory, and the ranks of anthropologists have been reinforced of late by not a few theologians. Looking at it from a distance, it might appear as though the Revelation theory is hopelessly defeated. On closer scrutiny we find that this need not be conceded. It is still very much alive.

Anthropology is like a two-edged sword. It cuts both ways. Instead of bringing unalloyed comfort and aid to the Evolutionary school, it quite often seems to turn against evolution most effectively. We shall call attention to this feature in a later paragraph; let it be said in passing that the final findings of anthropology are far more likely to favor the Revelation theory than to be hostile to it.

Meanwhile it may be of interest to summon some of the outstanding opponents of the theory.

(Revelation)
not
Evol, or
From the Anthro-ists

There can be no doubt but that E. O. James speaks for the majority of his colleagues when he says: "If it be supposed that modern savages are degenerates, and, therefore, have lost the pure religion once revealed, it can only be explained on the supposition that mankind was not sufficiently developed to retain a pure religion, a conclusion that takes from the omniscience of the Deity. The theory of a primitive revelation may, therefore, be laid aside at once as untenable, and religion, like civilization, be regarded as a product of evolution, or as a search after the Unknown and Infinite" (6). Mr. James' conclusion in regard to God's omniscience might tempt one to engage in a theological discussion, but that would be out of place in a thesis of this kind. . . .

Mr. Reville is in full agreement with his English friend. To quote: "Today, when we know that humanity has left traces of its existence in the epochs when the mammoth, the reindeer and the cave-bear still inhabited the central and southern regions of our country [France]; when undoubted discoveries have revealed the state of barbarism, of extreme grossness, in which our ancestors lived for prolonged periods, when we have ascertained that the further back we go in the chain of time, so much the more does man approach the animal—we must confess that it is infinitely hard to imagine that in the beginning of this slow and painful development, man, yet plunged in absolute ignorance, was in possession of sublime religious doctrines such as the most pure inspiration has been able to offer to cultivated societies, rich in accumulated experience. It is in contradiction to all that we know as to the extremely miserable and uncultured state of humanity anterior to history" (17).

Attention should be called to two rather glaring fallacies in Mr. Reville's argument. In the first place, it is not in accordance with archeology that "the further back we go in the chain of time, so much the more does man approach the animal." It would be much easier to prove by the same science that the first man was quite similar to the present type of *homo sapiens*. We think most people will agree with Dr. Leuba when he says apropos this matter: "I do not imagine the first group of human beings to have been necessarily bloodthirsty brutes, incapable of anything but violence and cruelty. Why, then, should one be unwilling to attribute to the most primitive a degree of tender regard for his Creator?" (8). (3)

In the second place Mr. Reville overstates his case, when he asserts that primitive man, according to the Revelation theory, "was in possession of sublime religious doctrines such as the most pure inspiration has been able to offer to cultivated societies." A rational theory of Revelation does not entertain any such extreme views, a fact, to which, Mr. Reville could not have been total stranger. (4)

Menzies, of course, rejects the Revelation theory even in its modified form. He makes his position sufficiently clear by the following statement: "The theory that man was originally civilized and human, and that it was by a fall, by a degeneration from that earliest condition, that the state of savagery made its appearance, is now generally abandoned" (9).

Reinach speaks of the theory of a supernatural revelation to the earliest man as "a gratuitous and puerile hypothesis" (10). With due respect to the learned Hebrew ethnologist, it seems to us a rather "puerile" way of evading the issue.

A puerile statement is one which would only commend itself to one of childish intellect and must at once be rejected by anyone in possession of ordinary reasoning powers. This is not the position of the hypothesis of a primitive revelation. Either there is a God or there is not. If there is no God, then there is no more argument in the case. But the non-existence of God is not a proposition which any rational person will attempt to prove, nor (5) can prove. If there is a God, it is quite certain that he could make a revelation of himself; and, if he cares for his human creatures, it is even *a priori probable.* If we admit the possibility of the supernatural, does it not follow that we are thereby obliged to admit, as well, the No possibility of supernatural manifestations, and, consequently, the possibility of a direct oral or visible revelation to primitive man? In fact, to deny this is to deny the liberty of God. And to dismiss this possibility as a childish notion, is to act very irrationally and unscientifically. Speaking about a revealed monotheism in the primeval days, Dr. Jevons says: "We cannot maintain it to be impossible, or even improbable, that such revelation may have been made to primitive man" (11).

Those who have noted the findings of present-day anthropology and related sciences cannot escape the conviction that the Sacred Antediluvian traditions are being corroborated as the years go by. It cannot be otherwise, since all truth, scientific as well as religious, springs from the same eternal source which is God.

In this connection it is interesting to observe the shifting of emphasis in the schools of comparative religion.

When the same myths with practically the same symbolism were found all over the world; when identical stories in races as far removed from one another as the Bushmen and the Australians, the Eskimos and the Polynesians were discovered, the anthropologists of yesterday would account for this strange uniformity on the basis of parallel development, due to the mental construction of the individual (12).

"It is easy to prove," says Professor Buchanan, "that the striking similarity in primitive religious ideas comes not from the historic connections of early peoples, but from the identity in the mental construction of the individual man, wherever found" (13).

It is not quite as "easy to prove" as Professor Buchanan and Dr. Brinton would have us believe. In fact the very opposite could be easier of proof. A large number of very recent studies have shown the enormous importance of the transmission of cultural elements from one area to another. Diffusion is known to have occurred over vast areas and in a multiplicity of ways even within the sharp (6) limitations of that relatively short chronological period to which our knowledge refers. Speaking in the most general terms, detailed and careful studies have invariably revealed the fact that the empirical possibilities of transmission are much greater than would at first glance seem possible.

Having studied the historical growth of various culture complexes, Dr. Rivers is convinced that they are really the result of diffusion (14).

Elliot Smith denies altogether the possibility that cultural or mythological resemblances may be due to the (6) common tendencies of the human mind. He says: "Inventiveness and originality are qualities so exceptional that whenever similar cult-practices or myths are found in different parts of the earth, the only possible explanation is to regard them as evidence of race-contact" (15).

Another radical opponent of the "parallel development" idea of Brinton et al. is found in Dr. Fr. Ratzel. He considers that the idea of independent development in the social science is comparable to the theory of spontaneous generation of biology, and is, therefore, to be regarded as essentially anachronistic (16).

If the idea of spontaneous generation of religion is ruled out, if parallel development of religion in various
* (6) culture areas is rejected, while diffusion and transmission are held to be universal phenomena, we cannot escape the inference that there was a time when the whole human family occupied the same home, that it had a religion, a tradition and experience all in common.

The suggestion that a number of fundamental similarities in cultural ideas and inventions, are due to their common origin in a prehistoric period prior to the dispersion of the human race is considered to have points in its favor. "It is entirely conceivable," says Lowie, "that the beliefs shared by the ancient Egyptians with the modern Australians or Andamanese are in all three instances survivals of extremely ancient and deep-rooted human set of ideas" (17).

These statements receive added strength from the historical and anthropological proofs of the *Unity of the Human Species.* "We venture even to predict," says Professor Ratzel, "that in the religion of the most remote African and Australian people, just as in the rest of the culture possessed by them, will be found germs or survivals of Indian or Egyptian tradition" (18).

H. G. Wells admits that "history as it grows clearer
(7) and science as its range extends, display as a reasonable and demonstrable fact, that men form one universal

brotherhood, that they spring from one common origin" (19).

This opinion is concurred in by Columbia University's venerable anthropologist, Frank Boas. We note his expression: "Science has investigated the question whether (8 man's origin was monogenetic or polygenetic, and is inclined to settle it in favor of the former" (20). The same authority asserts "there can be no doubt that in the main the mental characteristics of man are the same all over the world" (21). And he adds: "when we consider the same question from a purely psychological point of view, we recognize that one of the most fundamental traits which distinguish the human mind from the animal mind is common to all races of man" (22).

It must be obvious that all this has a profound bearing on the question of primeval Revelation in its relation to monotheism. (a) The similarity of tradition confirms the unity of the species; (b) the facts of transmission and diffusion of culture in every part of the world compel us to assume a common home in prehistoric times; (3) the strange remnants of a monotheistic faith found among most races even down to this day recall to us that early period in human experience when Deity was revealed to man as the One God. (8)

Even Tylor seems to sense the probability of this original revelation to man. We have referred to this particular statement of his in another connection, but feel it is very much to the point in the present discussion. He says: 'No religion of mankind lies in utter isolation from (9) the rest, and the thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilization, perhaps even of human existence" (23).

We conclude that there is no valid reason for rejecting
the Revelation theory. It is borne out by history, by
anthropology, by conscience, and by the earliest Sacred
(10) Traditions of our race. And we shall only agree with
the great majority of mankind, even in its most profound
and illustrious thinkers, when we affirm that such a
revelation, which we are obliged to postulate, in order
to account for the phenomena presented by religion, is a
perpetual and unassailable fact.

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(4) L. H. Jordan, Op. Cit., pp. 239, 240.
(5) David Hume, cited by L. H. Jordan, vide supra, p. 216.
(6) E. O. James, Primitive Ritual and Belief, p. 229.
(7) A. Reville, A History of Religions, p. 40.
(8) J. H. Leuba, Op. Cit., pp. 127, 128.
(9) A. Menzies, History of Religion, p. 17.
(10) S. Reinach, Cults, Myths and Religions, p. V.
(11) F. B. Jevons, cited by B. C. A. Windle, Religions Past and Present, p. 27.
(12) D. G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive Peoples, p. 9.
(13) Professor Buchanan, cited by D. G. Brinton, Op. Cit., p. 9.
(14) W. H. R. Rivers, The Ethnological Analysis of Culture, (British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1911, p. 494.)
(15) Elliot Smith, cited by E. O. James, vide supra, p. 181.
(16) F. Ratzel, cited by F. Schleiter, Religion and Culture, p. 17.
(17) R. H. Lowie, Primitive Culture, p. 115.
(18) F. Ratzel, History of Mankind, Vol. I, p. 40.
(19) G. H. Wells, The Outline of History, Vol. I, p. 584.
(20) F. Boas, The Mind of Primitive Man, (Journal of American Folklore, Vol. XIV, p. 7.)
(21) F. Boas, Op. Cit., p. 3.
(22) F. Boas, Op. Cit., p. 7.
(23) E. B. Taylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. I, p. 421.

CHAPTER XXII

DEGENERATION

CHAPTER XXI was devoted to a discussion on what seems to be the only rational origin of Religion. It is not denied that the tendency of the normal human mind to seek a first Cause may have operated as a secondary factor, but we conclude that it is primarily due to 1) the inborn moral urge known as the voice of conscience, "accusing or else excusing" the actions of man, and 2) to a direct, primeval and supernatural revelation.

Equipped in this way the first man possessed the essential elements for normal development, intellectually, socially and ethically, so that he might in due time be able to subdue and utilize the forces of nature, attain to human perfection, and maintain a spiritual harmony with his Creator.

But this was not to be.

The human family has not been a happy family. It is but too evident that much of man's existence on earth has been characterized by degradation and misery, that it has been a course of degeneration to a lower plane instead of an evolutionary progress to higher levels. That this is especially true of the religious development is readily proved. And our proofs are not theoretic but historic.

Strange as it may seem, the theory that polytheism, in all its sordid forms is a result of degeneration from an originally pure monotheism, is verified by the ethnic traditions, by the written documents, and the findings of anthropology.

If this be granted, how may we account for it? We do not see how it can be accounted for unless we admit the emergence of sin into man's existence, a definite (1) break in the relationship between man and his God in the early days of prehistory.

"We are often told," says J. F. MacFadyen, "that in the light of the teaching of modern science, we should no longer speak of the Fall of man, but rather of his gradual ascent from a lowly origin. Whether one is willing to admit the truth of such a Fall or not, it will be generally conceded that there is an evident 'downward pull' in the moral life, alike in the individual and the race" (1).

It may astonish some to find that this "downward pull" of which Dr. MacFadyen speaks is not confined to non-Christian peoples. Both Jewish and Christian history furnish many humiliating illustrations of the tendency to moral degeneration.

Of this tendency among the Jews Professor Jordan speaks as follows: "The Hebrews, notwithstanding their (2) unique experiences and the special safeguards with which they were surrounded, would utterly have wrecked their future, had it not been for the appearance of Moses and a succession of powerful and heroic prophets" (2).

The other races did not have the advantage of such prophetic warnings. Little wonder, then, that they strayed away,—farther and yet farther away, from the original faith!—

In his lectures on Modern Atheism Professor Naville, calling attention to the universal tendency to deterioration, (3) says: "Traces are found almost everywhere in the midst of idolatrous superstitions, of a religion comparatively pure and often stamped with a lofty morality. Did humanity begin with a coarse fetishism, and thence rise by slow degrees to higher conceptions? Do the traces of a comparatively pure monotheism first show themselves in the recent periods? Contemporary science inclines more to answer in the negative. It is in the most ancient (3) historical ground that the laborious investigators of the past meet with the most elevated ideas of religion" (3).

The scientists have been referred to. There are anthropologists of high rank who agree that man's religious (4) evolution has been on a downward plane, that religion has degenerated in the course of his earthly sojourn.

We have quoted Andrew Lang on various occasions, and we all know by this time just where he stood on the question of religious evolution. In his book, *Customs and Myths,* he proves at length how this process of degeneration came about in the different culture areas, and incidentally cites Max Müller, whose views on this problem he gives his unqualified approval. According to Max Müller, "men had originally pure ideas about the gods, and expressed them in language which we should call figurative. The figures remained when their meaning was lost; the names were then supposed to be gods, the *nomina* became *numina* and out of the inextricable confusion of thought which followed, the belief in cannibal, bestial, adulterous and incestuous gods was evolved" (4).

Speaking of the universal tendency of religion to degenerate, the German historian F. Ratzel says: "The mass of mankind degraded the great Spirit, the Creator and Orderer of the world, into foolish beast-semblances and ignoble anthropomorphisms" (5).

It is somewhat of a surprise to find Dr. Leuba ranging himself on the same side of this question. He asserts the theory of degeneration is quite consistent with our present anthropological knowledge. It is evident that "within the limits of definite historic periods sacrifice and prayer (4) became more and more numerous and more artificial in ✓ proportion as the idea of a Supreme Being grows dim" (6). As the process of degeneration continued the gods were transformed into beings more nearly like the worshippers (4) themselves. . . . One may thus admit that "the oldest ✓ conception of the Maker was the noblest" (7).

We cannot forego the pleasure of calling Mr. Menzies to testify to the fact of degeneration. To those who know his viewpoint on the origin of religion it must appear strange that he can make such a statement as: (5) "the races among whom fetishism is found exhibit a well known feature of decadence of religion, namely that the great god or gods have grown weak and faint, and smaller gods and spirits have crowded in to fill the blank thus caused. Worship is transferred from the great beings who are the original gods of the tribe, and whom it still professes in a vague way to believe, to numerous smaller beings, and from the good to the bad" (8).

We have thus far treated of degeneration in a general way; let us apply the principle to certain definite culture areas for additional proof.

India. The great river Ganges is a faithful symbol of the religious development in India. Having its first sources among the pure snows of the lofty Himalayas it descends into the plains, and as it picks its tortuous way through the country it carries with it such mass of indescribable filth, that by the time it reaches the sea it is become the dirtiest river in the world. The religion of India had its source in the pure regions of Dyaus Pitar, the Sky-

Father, but this pure stream soon became polluted in its course down through the millenniums, until it presents itself to us as the most heterogeneous, the most immoral and the most disgusting of all known religious systems.

In order not to appear prejudiced against the Indian situation, we shall call a few of the best friends India ever had, men who knew her best. We refer to such men as Dr. Griswold, Sir Monier Williams and Dr. MacNicol.

Griswold concedes that "Dyaus Pitar in the Rig-Veda is little more than a mythological fossil which possibly bear witness to a time when the conception of Sky-Father was taken more seriously than it was in the Vedic Age" (9). May we not conclude that the original position of the Heaven-god was thrust into the background through the advent of the numerous nature-gods as the people came into the Punjab? Sir Williams does not contradict this conclusion when he declares that, "in the Vedas unity in the conception of deity soon diverged into various ramifications" (10).

Discussing the "dethronement" of the god Varuna, which he calls a "strange and unaccountable" phenomenon, Dr. MacNicol writes: "How it came about that this god was deposed from his high eminence and the victorious progress in India of an ethical Theism brought to a sudden close one has not the materials even to conjecture. In the last book of the Rig-Veda there is no hymn to Varuna, for by that time monotheism had definitely given place in the development of Indian religion to pantheism, and there is no longer room for this stern and righteous god. . . . It may well be that when we hear the poet say 'I bid farewell to the great god, the Father, I leave the Father, for my choice is Indra' (Rig-Veda X. 3, 4) we are present at one of the great turning points in India's spiritual history" (11).

How do the Hindus themselves regard the evolution of their religion? Their testimony, if accessible, should have great weight in the present discussion. R. A. Hume, an expert on Hinduism, writes: "It is the frank conviction of devout Hindus that Hinduism has declined by four descents from its pristine estate and is now in a fourth and debased condition called the kaliyug" (12).

Persia. According to the *Gathas,* the Iranians were no longer monotheists, when these sacred books were written. Thus we find Zoroaster calling the people back to the old religion, the pure faith of one God, which they had forsaken. For the authority with which he summons the people to the worship of this one and living God, he appeals to "the sayings of old which *Ahura* revealed."

China. In addition to what has already been noted in connection with the religion of China, we may say that the historians have found proofs of a degeneration setting in as early as in the reign of Shun. There are allusions to certain practices which seem to be in the nature of new development.

As time went on the distinctive belief in the personality of Shang-ti became obscured, and he was degraded from his supremacy to the level of the impersonal heaven.

At this stage of the development Confucius appeared. Unfortunately, he did not call his people back to the early faith, he was in no sense a religious reformer or even a leader, but, as R. K. Douglass holds, "he sanctioned the worship of spirits, and omitting all mention of Shang-ti, he reduced that deity to his position of one among the host of heaven" (13).

Egypt. In discussing the monotheism of Egypt we found that the order of development was the exact opposite of that which any evolutionary theory of religious origin would require, but in perfect accord with the observed phenomena connected with man's lapse into sin. Hence we may expect to find the noblest and purest faith exhibited in the most ancient literature, and a later debasement. This is amply verified by all the documents. In the earliest dynasties we meet the doctrines of the unity, personality, and spirituality of God, the Creator of the world. By the time of the 19th dynasty, or about the Exodus, the conception of the personality of God had faded away, and a system of nature-worship of the grossest kind had taken its place. The worship of cats and bulls, crocodiles and beetles shows only too plainly how low and degraded the religion had become.

Negro Africa. The process of religious degeneration may be observed in every tribe of the Dark Continent.

Le Roy says of the Bantus: "We have an impression that their notion of the Divinity has undergone an evident retrogression" (14).

In quoting Dr. Nassau, to this same effect, Jevons concludes: "This [monotheistic] belief is in fact a dying tradition" (15).

Let us quote again the old Ba-Ila chief's opinion of God: "Today Leza is not what he is wanted to be. Long ago he was the One who could be urged to do well, but today he has left off doing so." Their legends also plainly indicate that the Supreme God, Leza, is deteriorating (16).

What are we then to infer from the present state of the African religion? Is the idea of God being slowly evolved out of their crude beliefs? Is it not rather that the people have well-nigh lost the knowledge of God which once their forefathers possessed? "I should infer," says R. E. Dennett, "from the long study of the people, that their fetishism is an overgrowth imposed upon the purer knowledge they once certainly possessed" (17).

Australia. The religious conceptions of the Australians give the impression of decadence and corruption.

Menzies admits that "There is a general tendency to degradation from the more lofty conceptions associated with the All-Father belief in primitive times. There can be little doubt that the doctrine once was not without influence on the ordinary life of those who held it, and yet, today religion and morality are often divorced in Australia" (18).

We have often referred to Durkheim's work on Australian beliefs. Here we would note that he finds it quite probable that the idea of the All-Father was purer of foreign elements at the beginning, than in the civilizations which followed. With time, it was covered over and obscured little by little by the ever-growing mass of animistic and totemic superstitions (19).

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(4) A. Lang, Customs and Myths, p. 199.
(5) Fr. Ratzel, The History of Mankind, Vol. II, p. 143.
(6) J. H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion, p. 104.
(7) J. H. Leuba, Op. Cit., p. 105.
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(10) Monier Williams, Indian Wisdom, cited by F. F. Ellinwood, Op. Cit., p. 74.
(11) N. MacNicol, The Religious Quest of India, p. 15.
(12) R. A. Hume, (Missionary Review of the World, April, 1928, p. 276.)
(13) R. K. Douglass, Confucianism and Taoism, p. 84.
(14) A. Le Roy, The Religion of the Primitive, p. 121.
(15) F. B. Jevons, Comparative Religion, p. 168.
(16) Smith and Dale, The Ila-Speaking Peoples of N. Rhodesia, Vol. II, p. 199.
(17) R. E. Dennett, At the Back of the Black Man's Mind, p. 168.
(18) A. Menzies, Op. Cit., p. 199.
(19) A. Durkheim, Elementary Forms of Religious Life, p. 289.

Chapter XXIII

CONCLUSION

THE first chapters of this Work were devoted to a discussion of the principal theories of the Genesis of Religion. The chief characteristics of each were noted as they passed in review before us. The arguments advanced in support of each theory were analyzed, as were also the more serious objections, which, in the course of time, had been lodged against them. We were duly impressed by the eminent scholarship of the leading advocates of each particular theory, but we could not escape the conviction that they failed to find a rational solution of the problem. Personally, we are confident that the reason for this evident failure must be sought in the fact that their theories all assume that the evolution of religion has always been of an upward trend.

Our next object was to call attention to a peculiar phenomenon, the presence of which, most of the theories, tacitly or openly recognized. We refer to the conception of *Monotheism.* The general distribution of this belief was investigated and verified. Much space was given to a detailed study of it, and a mass of documentary evidence was gathered from the ancient civilization as well as a large collection of data from the traditions and present-day culture of primitive races. All these sources established beyond the shadow of a doubt that monotheistic types of faith had existed among all the races at the dawn of history, and that the evolution of religion has ever been from the simple to the complex, from the purer forms to the less pure, from the worship of one God to that of many gods.

It might be objected that the earliest records of the Sumerians and Babylonians reveal no definite traces of monotheism. It is still more certain, however, that the later periods of those nations showed no tendency to generate or develop it. We may, then, quite consistently conclude, that even there monotheism was the earliest form of religious belief, and that their historic cults were extreme degenerations of it. For it is clearly in the last degree unlikely that the direction of development in prehistoric times should have been the reverse of that exhibited in the historic period. Any law known to be operative in the historic times, may confidently be assumed to have been operative in the same way in the days of prehistory.

Facts—we repeat it—are stubborn things. All the facts involved in this problem point to the inescapable conclusion that there was a time in man's earliest existence when he had a true, though very rudimentary knowledge of God as One personal Being; a conclusion which, however irreconcilable with the modern theories on the origin of religion, is in perfect harmony with all human experience, and in full accord with the ancient documents and traditions.

Here we might be content to rest our case. We believe it is sufficiently supported by impregnable proofs.

When we brought into our discussion the Revelation Theory and the phenomenon of degeneration it was not because they were necessary to prove our point; our reason for doing it was purely personal and subjective.

We hold that monotheism, with all that it connotes, cannot be explained, unless we postulate a direct objective

Revelation. It ought to be obvious to all that such tenets as the Unity of God, man's duty to obey him, and the hope of immortality, could not possibly have become the possession of early man except by a divine revelation. Things transcendent cannot be acquired by the mere natural use of the senses.

Finally we tried to show how the universal tendency to degeneration constitutes a formidable argument alike for the primacy of Monotheism and the present degraded forms of religion in many regions of the earth.

This study has demonstrated to us that man is religious wherever and whenever we meet him. The farther back we go into the hoary ages of antiquity, the clearer the evidences of an original monotheistic faith. The fundamental facts of this faith were revealed to man as he began his career in the world. And the vestiges of monotheism found in the primitive cultures of today are but the last lingering rays of that original revelation.

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